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ABSTRACT

Nebraska's legislature directed the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education to complete the first statewide plan for postsecondary education by July 1, 1992. The Plan is periodically revised to reflect the changing needs of Nebraska and its constituents. Community colleges are addressed in the statewide plan, including discussion of role and mission, instruction, research, public service, geographic service areas, and peer groups. A table lists Nebraska's public community colleges with information on campus location and area counties. Chapters cover: Nebraska's shared vision of postsecondary education for the twenty-first century; roles and missions; providing access; meeting students', employers', and citizen's needs; creating exemplary educational institutions; creating partnerships; operating high quality institutions within the context of limited resources; and the statewide facilities plan. (TGO)

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ED 431 444

Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education

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Chapter One
Introduction

Preparing a comprehensive postsecondary education plan for any state is exceedingly complex. This planning requires a clear understanding of the roles and missions of the sectors and institutions within postsecondary education. It calls for an awareness of the many issues affecting all levels of education in the state, as well as in other regions of the country. Planning demands identifying and setting priorities to meet statewide postsecondary education goals.

Successful comprehensive planning is dependent on a shared, realistic vision of what postsecondary education can and should become in the future.

In November of 1990, the people of Nebraska voted to amend their Constitution, assigning comprehensive statewide planning for postsecondary education to a new Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education effective, January, 1992. The Legislature directed the Coordinating Commission to complete the first statewide plan for postsecondary education by July 1, 1992. While this date reflected a mandate, it was but a precursor to an evolving process and an evolving document. Never completely finished, the plan is as much a process as a product.

Nebraska's Postsecondary Education Comprehensive Statewide Plan must address the critical issues our society and our institutions confront today. The plan must be dynamic and flexible to accommodate change and, at the same time, lay a solid framework to guide current and future actions.

- For the Commission, the Comprehensive Plan serves as an operating manual upon which rules, procedures and decisions are based.

- For the state's postsecondary educational sectors and institutions, it is a guide, providing objectives and directions to work in conjunction with their own planning and policy-making processes.

- For state government, the Comprehensive Plan will help establish continuity of policy and provide a consistent direction that can balance the inevitable changes in administrations and office holders.

- For the people of Nebraska, it is a process that is intended to represent them as students, present and future; as employers; and as taxpayers.

The Comprehensive Plan is inextricably linked to the Commission's rules and regulations which have direct implications for the state's public postsecondary educational institutions. Among other functions, the Commission has responsibility to review and approve or disapprove these institutions' proposed and existing instructional programs, review and modify budget requests, and approve or disapprove capital construction projects.

"We can choose a plan that will mean the difference between educational institutions that thrive in the coming century and institutions that struggle merely to survive."

Comprehensive, by definition, is a broad consideration, perhaps to the point of all inclusiveness. Nonetheless, this Comprehensive Plan does not answer all questions about Nebraska postsecondary education. It will not revolutionize our postsecondary education structure. The Comprehensive Plan is built upon the foundation of existing postsecondary educational institutions within our state, the existing levels of student preparation, employer needs, and financial resources committed to postsecondary education, as well as upon our state's Constitution and diverse statutes. Yet, as described in the Commission Vision Statement, "**ONE NEBRASKA: A Shared Vision of Postsecondary Education in the Twenty-First Century,**" changes in our state, nation and world impose a sense of urgency for reform within postsecondary education. Over time, the changes that will result from the Comprehensive Plan policies will strengthen our postsecondary educational institutions as they confront demands brought forth by change.

The Commission is committed to a higher education environment that includes equality and fairness for all people, irrespective of considerations such as age, culture, disability, gender or race. The context of this document reflects this commitment as it addresses racial and cultural diversity.

As the environment for postsecondary education changes, the Comprehensive Plan must continually evolve and adjust. It is the responsibility of those who are interested in education and care about our state's future to examine regularly the continued development of this vital document and assure it meets the state's changing needs.

Chapter Two

ONE NEBRASKA: A Shared Vision of Postsecondary Education for the Twenty-First Century

At a time when our world, our nation and our state are rapidly changing, the Commission sets forth a vision of postsecondary education in Nebraska that demands coordination and partnerships, flexibility, innovation, and achievement at the highest level. It is a vision that recognizes the critical place of postsecondary education in Nebraska's future participation in the twenty-first century.

> *"Where there is no vision, the people perish."*
>
> *Proverb*

The vision is based on several assumptions about the future. While no one can accurately predict the future, trends upon which we can predict change are nonetheless clear. Many changes will have direct impact on postsecondary education. If we are to be affected by change, it is crucial that we are active participants in that process.

We will live in a nation and a state with increased racial and cultural diversity. The concept of "minority" will describe reality inadequately as minority populations become majorities in some states. Our citizens, many of whom have assumed that their command of the English language could suffice for them throughout the world, will discover the need for Spanish and other languages within our own country. African-Americans, Asians, Hispanics, and Native Americans, among others, will play increasingly larger and more important roles within our nation s infrastructure. With each passing day, our state will more closely mirror this nation-wide trend.

Technology will increasingly pervade our lives, both at work and at home. To remain competitive and continue to enjoy a high standard of living, we must integrate these technologies into the knowledge and skill base of Nebraskans.

Many recent world-wide political events that have changed our world substantially also have brought hope for a more stable world. The Commission believes this stability is more likely to endure with enlightened citizens who have the ability and willingness to view others with open minds. Educated citizens who can make informed decisions will contribute solutions that further advance our national and international stability.

In Nebraska, fewer citizens have roots in our rural areas and communities. The state is becoming increasingly urbanized. While agriculture will remain a cornerstone industry within our state, industrial and service diversification will change the overall basis of our state's economy.

For many, change itself is a frightening and formidable adversary. Postsecondary education must lead the way for the people of our state to understand the positive implications of change. Preparing Nebraskans for change will prepare them for success.

Nebraskans always have embraced change as essential to survival. By adapting to and using the natural resources around them, our state s earliest residents, Native Americans, had survived by developing a culture that adapted to the harsh realities of life on the Plains. The settlers that followed in the 1800s survived by using open prairies for farm and ranch land that fed and supported their families. Their successors survived by broadening the state s economy into one of national and international multi-industrial strength. The challenge of change is inherent in the spirit of Nebraska.

"As onward we wend, thinking of our children,

Many trails of buffalo we behold,

Many trails of life.

Pawnee Ritual Song

During the last decades of the twentieth century, Nebraska's postsecondary educational institutions have responded to accelerated social, political, cultural, and economic changes. These changes are a prelude to those that await us in the twenty-first century. To meet the diverse challenges of our future, Nebraska's postsecondary educational institutions must prepare to set aside certain long-standing practices that have served us well in the past.

Change is inevitable. Positive responses to change are not. Failure to choose to respond pro-actively to change can destine our postsecondary institutions to indifference and mediocrity.

To deny change is to choose:

- The lessened competitiveness of a second-rate economy
- A populace less able to make complex decisions
- A less desirable social and cultural environment

To deny change is to choose not to:

- Prepare students to succeed in the world they will enter after graduation
- Welcome and embrace racial and cultural diversity as a vital element within our institutions
- Make difficult decisions about duplication, transferability, and accountability that assure taxpayers their dollars are wisely spent.

Nebraska cannot afford to deny change. We must choose to accept its challenge.

"Nothing endures but change."

Heraclitus

Fortunately, Nebraska is well situated to meet this challenge. Its historic commitment to all education, including its public institutions of higher learning, provides an important legacy of public support. Nebraskans understand that cooperation and coordination are necessary for our mutual well-being. They know that sacrifice and commitment are essential to any worthwhile endeavor. Their admiration for an entrepreneurial response to change promises strong public support for the work of the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education.

Nebraskans are ready for change. We proceed from a position of strength. We can fairly, responsibly and creatively resolve issues facing Nebraska now and in the twenty-first century. We can choose a plan that will mean the difference between educational institutions that thrive in the coming century and institutions that struggle merely to survive.

The Commission's vision is based on a comprehensive approach to postsecondary education involving the University of Nebraska, the State Colleges, the Community Colleges, the Independent Colleges and Universities, and the Private Career Institutions. The Commission recognizes the vital role of each of these sectors in meeting statewide educational goals. It encourages each institution and sector to flourish and lead within its distinctive role and mission, yet cooperate and coordinate with the others.

Within this context, the Commission sees its role as one that strives to minimize divisions between sectors and institutions and to maximize the potential of all. The intended result is a nationally recognized, efficient, and coordinated postsecondary educational system that effectively serves its statewide constituency and contributes to our nation's goals.

Seven themes emerged as the Commission envisioned the future of postsecondary education in the state. The Commission defines its vision for the future of postsecondary education within the scope of each of these themes.

1. Define distinct institutional roles

Coordinated postsecondary education in Nebraska provides institutions an opportunity to advance to more specific, targeted superiority. Nebraska's needs are far too diverse for any one institution to satisfy. More clearly

defined mission statements regarding the roles of teaching, research, and public service, combined with increased coordination among Nebraska's postsecondary educational institutions, will provide direction for each institution.

"The direction in which education starts a man will determine his life."

Plato

As each institution defines its distinct role within the system, each will identify the students, programs, and services most appropriate to its role. Each can develop institutional strengths that enhance its distinct role and support the total responsibilities of postsecondary education. The Commission can facilitate the cooperation among the sectors and institutions that is necessary to achieve this goal.

Nebraska students will reap the immediate benefits of this diverse postsecondary educational system. Students will choose institutions with a clear understanding of each institution's distinct role and mission. The intent is not to limit the number of students entering any one institution but instead to increase a student s opportunity for success. Informed choices by students based on the "personalities" of the individual institutions will lead to improved student satisfaction, better student retention and increased numbers of students successfully reaching their goals. Informed choices will allow all students, including minorities, women and nontraditional-age students in Nebraska, to identify institutions that best serve their individual needs. Ultimately, Nebraska as a state will benefit from the coordinated and clearly defined roles of postsecondary educational institutions.

2. Fulfill missions of teaching, research and public service

Nebraska and its students are best served by a network of postsecondary educational institutions that fulfill their missions of teaching, research, and public service. The emphasis and levels of responsibility for each mission will vary from sector to sector and institution to institution. The Commission challenges each institution to find a balance, appropriate to its role and mission, that will best serve the students and meet the needs of the state.

The heart of any great educational system is the student, the learner. Students' needs are central to designing and implementing effective and relevant educational programs. Within the mission of teaching, the state s postsecondary institutions will provide a range of educational opportunities which will enable graduates to prosper in their chosen fields. Education succeeds only if it instills in the individual a lifelong commitment to learning. Graduates must leave our institutions with skills that lead to satisfying careers, and as enlightened citizens with the knowledge and values

to make a positive contribution to our democratic society and to enrich their lives.

A professional and qualified faculty is essential to each institution's teaching mission. Faculty must be supported in their efforts to be professionally active in their academic or technical field; to seek professional development opportunities; to embrace new, improved teaching methods; and, at all times, to strive to meet the needs of their students.

Each institution must maintain a balance between teaching and research that is appropriate to its mission. Research supports good teaching, so it is appropriate that all of Nebraska s institutions have a research role. However, the extent and purpose of research should vary from sector to sector and institution to institution.

"Teaching was not a profession then; it was a kind of missionary work."

Willa Cather

The technological and economical survival of our country and state, as well as the quality of our own lives, depends on research by postsecondary educational institutions. Research in areas pertaining directly to Nebraska and its leading industries is of particular interest and should be encouraged and recognized. However, many other worthwhile research projects go beyond Nebraska's needs, to advance knowledge and promote the professional development of faculty. These projects also deserve support when they relate to an institution's mission.

Successful educational institutions cannot operate in isolation from the communities and regions they serve. Useful public service is an integral part of the missions of teaching and research in all disciplinary programs, and it deserves encouragement and recognition.

The value of public service to a student's educational experience also should be recognized. As active participants in community service projects, students can learn firsthand of the many rewards and satisfactions resulting from service to others. Nebraska's postsecondary institutions, within the context of their missions, can provide leadership and human resources, enhance cultural awareness, and actively participate in public service activities. As with teaching and research, public service outcomes should meet both immediate and long-term needs.

3. Provide access to postsecondary education

Nebraska provides five vital sectors of postsecondary education, all rich with diverse prospects for students. Interlinked as a system, they offer access for

students of all ability levels. Appropriate and varying admission standards for each sector and institution will increase student success as measured by higher student retention, graduation, and job placement rates.

For students to succeed, however, they must be ready to learn. The primary means of providing access to postsecondary education is in properly preparing students in the primary and secondary systems. The Commission supports the reforms now underway in our kindergarten through twelfth grade educational systems. By improving academic skills at that level, college-bound students will have greatly increased opportunities for success in postsecondary education. For those inadequately prepared, a bridge between the K/12 system and postsecondary education will enable students to progress beyond their current levels. Postsecondary education and the K/12 system must work together to address where and how this need is best met.

"The secret of education lies in respecting the pupil."

Emerson

All Nebraskans deserve reasonable access to higher education. Discrimination or the impression of discrimination based on factors such as race, gender, wealth, age, disabilities, or place of origin have no place in education. Overcoming these barriers will require the continued joint effort of education, state government, and concerned leaders throughout the state.

The rising costs for postsecondary education throughout our country have raised concerns that students are being priced out of postsecondary education opportunities. Tuition and fee costs at Nebraska's public institutions are generally less than national averages. Despite this, for many Nebraskans paying for a college education is perceived as a significant barrier. To meet future needs, the Commission and the educational institutions should explore all possible ways to increase the size and scope of student financial aid programs. Postsecondary education must be affordable and accessible to the people of our state.

Nebraska's expansive geography creates a context in which higher education is more accessible to some than to others, based on their place of residence. Nebraska cannot and should not attempt to provide educational institutions within close proximity of all citizens. However, it can provide far more educational opportunities throughout the state through collaborative efforts using telecommunications and other emerging technologies that bring education to place-bound citizens around the state.

These technologies should become priorities at our educational institutions. They also require the support of the state government and citizenry. People must become aware of the total offerings available through emerging technologies if they are to gain fuller access to the many educational opportunities they present.

> *"What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us."*
>
> *Emerson*

4. Meet the needs of students and the state of Nebraska

Education that is progressive and satisfying begins by identifying and addressing the current and future needs of the citizens of the state. Nebraska depends on postsecondary education to provide a creative, problem-solving citizenry for the state, a skilled and professional work force for the state's employers, and an education that develops the "whole person" who is prepared for a lifetime of learning.

To meet the state's future needs, Nebraska's schools, colleges, and universities must produce more people with skills and knowledge in the fields of math and science. An untapped source is women and minorities, whose numbers are still under-represented in these fields. They, and other students, can be encouraged to enter disciplines such as math, science, engineering, etc., leading to career fields where excellent opportunities exist. General education courses at each institution must support these efforts and further prepare our graduates for success in a changing society.

Student support services are essential at each institution. It is unacceptable to expect students to succeed in an educational environment that is unaware of or unresponsive to their needs. Students must feel welcomed and accepted. Services that address the needs of all students as well as those specific to minorities, the disabled, and nontraditional students will augment student retention and increase opportunities for success.

For the state of Nebraska and its students to participate successfully in a global community, postsecondary education must take on a more global perspective. Top quality programs emphasizing science, mathematics, communications, languages, and international studies will help Nebraska graduates compete among the world's best. Exposure to racial and cultural diversity in our institutions' student bodies and faculties will help to prepare graduates for success wherever they may live and work.

All Nebraskans should be literate and possess work and citizenship skills. The state' s postsecondary institutions must cooperate with communities and agencies within their service areas and, as appropriate, across the state, to help

assure that all citizens have access to educational programs providing these and other basic skills. Telecommunications and other emerging technologies will facilitate achievement of this goal.

Postsecondary education also will address the students' and citizens' needs for a healthy lifestyle within the state. Our colleges and universities will support efforts to promote awareness of health issues including initiatives toward campuses free of violence and drugs.

5. **Create exemplary postsecondary education institutions**

Nebraskans expect hard work, visible results, and continued improvement at their postsecondary institutions. The Commission envisions a postsecondary educational system throughout the state where students have greater expectations of success . . . where quality, not quantity, is the prevailing measure of success.

To reach these expectations, Nebraska's institutions must undergo a continual process of re-examination. Governing Boards must insist on quality and efficiency in all aspects of institutional operations. Boards and institutions must ask such questions as:

- Who should we serve?
- Is bigger always better?
- Can we be everything to everyone?
- Are we operating efficiently?
- Are faculty properly qualified?
- Are students receiving the best instruction possible in the classroom?
- Are we meeting the needs of under-represented populations in our state?
- Are students choosing our institutions for the right reasons?
- Are we the best that we can be?

"I know of no safe depository of the ultimate power of society but the people themselves . . ."

Thomas Jefferson

Merely stating that we provide excellence in education is not enough. Nebraska's colleges and universities should achieve measurable student outcomes and meet clearly defined accountability measures. Increased accountability at each institution through student and institutional assessment, improved student retention, good job placement rates, higher numbers of post-graduate degrees pursued, and recognition of outstanding performance will help confirm that Nebraskans receive good value for their postsecondary education tuition and tax dollars.

The Commission's goal is a state-wide network of institutions that is exemplary in its ability to understand and meet the educational needs of the state and its citizens. Departments and programs within these institutions must collaborate to provide interdisciplinary education that broadens students' educational experiences to better prepare them for the realities of living and working in a complex society.

It must be a system accessible to and supportive of students from all walks of life. This requires institutions that recognize the value of diversity and seek to recruit and hire women and men representing differing races and cultures. Program curriculum, support services, and student activities also should reflect awareness of the value of racial and cultural diversity.

"The very spring and root of honesty and virtue lie in good education.:

Plutarch

Motivation is a key element in the promotion of excellence. Institutions, faculty, staff and students who display high performance should be recognized appropriately. Students will be served best if faculty are encouraged to pursue professional development opportunities appropriate to their positions and their institution's role. Professional development will enable faculty to encounter new teaching and research methods, emerging technologies within their fields, and educational issues including racial and cultural diversity and international perspectives.

6. Create partnerships

A goal of the Commission is to be a catalyst in creating one of the best pre-kindergarten through postsecondary education systems in American education. This can be achieved. It will require collaborative partnerships and firm determination among citizens, the public and private sectors, and the state's pre-college and postsecondary educational institutions. It will require that businesses recognize and accept their role in the educational process. It will need the support of the state's leaders and citizens.

Education in Nebraska ideally would be "seamless" and seen as a continuum, starting with early childhood education in the family, leading to the elementary grades, through secondary and postsecondary education, to continued life-long learning opportunities. Each segment of the continuum needs to understand and support the goals of the others. Cooperative education programs that create bridges from one segment of education to the other will encourage and facilitate continuing education efforts.

Postsecondary education must contribute to this continuum with an integrated statewide network of accessible, transferable educational offerings.

Education must, in fact, become portable as students move from one sector or institution to the other. Distinct roles and missions will further promote articulation from institution to institution. The Commission, through its role as coordinator, will facilitate inter-institutional cooperative efforts, such as articulation agreements and laddering of programs and courses. As a result, students will avoid unnecessary expenditures of time and money and the state will eliminate unnecessary duplication of educational programs and facilities.

No educational system can operate successfully in isolation. Public and private postsecondary institutions could explore opportunities to collaborate and cooperate to offer the best programs at the least cost to taxpayers. Regular interaction among the institutions will facilitate joint planning, build coalitions, assure optimal use of resources, and create shared dreams.

The state of Nebraska cannot attempt to provide programs to meet everyone's educational needs. Postsecondary educational services that are not readily available and are expensive to replicate in Nebraska may be available via regional, national, and international consortia linkages. To make maximum use of these collaborative efforts, all institutions need heightened awareness of the educational opportunities they present.

"The Salvation of the State is Watchfulness in the Citizen."

Hartley Burr Alexander

To realize lifelong learning, postsecondary education must extend beyond colleges and universities. Partnerships involving businesses, industries, agencies, cultural institutions, communities and families . . . in concert with educational institutions . . . will greatly broaden the scope of educational endeavors.

Nebraska's employers can play a vital role by encouraging development of their employees' individual potentials through financial assistance and other support for increased education. Working together, educators and employers can use innovations and technologies that make education more accessible in the work place.

Such partnerships have other benefits. Progressive partnerships forged between the state, its communities, businesses, and Nebraska's postsecondary educational system can fortify achievement of the state s economic development goals. They can create valuable linkages between academic and industrial research.

Similarly constructed partnerships between governmental and public agencies, cultural institutions, concerned citizens within the state and

educational institutions will help resolve societal issues facing our citizens. These partnerships also will serve to bridge gaps within the state between the east and west, cities and rural communities, rich and poor, educated and under-educated. They will help lead us together toward the "good life" all Nebraskans hope to enjoy.

"It is time we had uncommon schools, that we did not leave off our education when we begin to become men and women."

Thoreau

7. **Operate high quality institutions within the context of limited resources**

The postsecondary educational system envisioned within this document asks Nebraskans to continue their traditional commitment of energy, time, and resources. In return, Nebraskans can expect each educational institution and sector within the state to garner maximum value from fiscal and human resources. Improved quality, within the context of limited resources, demands that postsecondary educational institutions become increasingly efficient, targeted, productive, innovative, and receptive to change.

Decisions on programs and capital construction projects, modifications of budgets, and the allocation of state funds must be based on careful consideration of issues of need, quality, continuity, innovation, cost-effectiveness, access and equity. The state has limited resources; many competing social and economic priorities also must be addressed. These factors must be considered within the context of the Commission's review of proposals of new instructional programs, construction projects, and budgets. Institutions regularly need to re-examine existing programs, practices, and facilities to assure they are appropriate to meet student and citizen needs. Governance and administrative structures at the state and institutional levels need to exemplify efficiency and effectiveness.

Citizens, as well, must be sensitive to limited public resources. Nebraska cannot afford to provide an educational program in response to every citizen's interest. By tapping into existing resources found both within and outside of our state, we can better serve the broader educational needs of the entire state.

* * * * * * *

The vision of postsecondary education must be broad enough to provide direction for a complex future, yet relevant to today's issues and concerns. It must serve as the foundation of a Comprehensive Plan that advocates educationally and economically sound, vigorous, progressive, and coordinated education throughout the state. To endure, the vision must be

shared and embraced by the educational community, the Governor, the Legislature, and businesses within our state. Most importantly, it must reflect and project the abiding values of the people of Nebraska.

Chapter Three
Define and Fulfill Roles and Missions

Each postsecondary education institution within our state and within our nation has a role and mission upon which it bases its educational programming and other operational procedures.

An institution's mission provides the rationale for its being and its operation. It defines the institution's fundamental convictions, values and characteristics. Traditionally, postsecondary education is considered in the context of three primary areas of responsibility within its mission: instruction, research and public service. Thus, each institution's mission provides the parameters for its programmatic service area. In addition, various institutions serve differing geographic areas of the state.

An institution's role identifies objectives toward fulfillment of its mission. It provides the basis for institutional accountability through measurable results. While mission statements may be broad, general statements, roles are more specific and clearly define the operational guidelines of an institution.

Roles and missions are not only applicable to postsecondary educational institutions. In meeting the goals set forth in the Comprehensive Plan, it is essential that the Commission cooperate with other entities, such as K/12 school systems and the state's employers to identify and fulfill their mutual role in meeting the learning need of all of our citizens.

Public Postsecondary Education Roles and Missions

Within Nebraska, each sector and each institution has mission responsibilities to greater or lesser degrees in instruction, research, and public service within their programmatic service areas. These roles and missions create the benchmark upon which we can measure excellence throughout our postsecondary education system.

The Commission believes Nebraska will be best served by pursuing the following objectives relating to role and mission:

- In fulfilling their roles and missions, postsecondary educational institutions hold most eminent the importance of high quality instruction to the individual and the value of educated citizens to society.

- Quality, not quantity, is the more important factor in evaluating fulfillment of roles and missions.

"Nebraska and its students are best served by a network of postsecondary educational institutions that fulfill their responsibilities toward missions of teaching, research and public service."

- Each institution has a clearly defined role and mission, and has students, programs and services that are appropriate to that institution's role and mission.

- Fulfilling the responsibilities of postsecondary education can best be accomplished when institutions with distinct roles and missions cooperate with each other. Part of the process for institutions to achieve coordination is to strike a balance within and between them to provide excellent teaching, appropriate research and pertinent public service to the state.

- Each institution values and promotes racial and cultural diversity within the framework of its missions of instruction, research and public service.

- Limited resources demand that each institution set priorities between and within instructional programs, research projects and public service activities as a basis for budget, program and facility decisions that best serve the needs of the students and the state. Institutions cannot be everything to everyone. Institutional leaders need to make difficult decisions to adjust to changing economic realities. These decisions may include reallocating resources to reflect higher priorities within their institutions. A role and mission is not an excuse for inflexibility or a rationale for resisting needed change.

One of the purposes of the Comprehensive Plan is also to assign a geographic service area to each public institution within the state. The assigned counties, their residents, and socio-economic forces are to be the primary beneficiaries of the programs and activities provided by the institution, especially for off-campus activities. Service areas are in no way meant to curtail students from other counties, states or nations from attending these institutions. The Commission recognizes that student internships, cooperative education positions and student teaching placements will cross geographic service areas.

- A public institution may not go outside its geographic/programmatic area of responsibility, as defined within this plan, unless permitted under rules and procedures adopted by the Commission.

- The Commission recognizes its definition of geographic and programmatic service areas creates the potential for layering, or overlap between institutions, in the context of programs and services. The Commission's concern is unnecessary duplication of programs and services, not necessarily an overlap of programs and services where demonstrated need exists. The Commission will monitor its rules and procedures regarding geographic service areas to determine if there is need for revision.

Instruction

The primary responsibility of our educational institutions is to facilitate learning. Students learn in many ways. Obviously, they learn in classrooms from faculty. But, students also learn from experience, from each other, from society and from the many new technologies to which they increasingly are exposed. From the most practical perspective, students learn from the total campus environment.

- It is imperative that postsecondary educators view education as an interactive process whereby students both draw from and contribute to the total environment of the institution. The Commission cautions that these values not be discarded as we implement new learning technologies that increase access and efficiency.

- The Commission encourages educators to accept teaching methods that achieve educational goals more quickly, more effectively and/or more efficiently.

Clearly defined instructional roles for each sector and institution will help students make informed choices of institutions that meet their needs. Once at the institution, students have the right to expect educational programs and support services which provide them with the best possible opportunity to learn and succeed. Given such a learning environment, it is then incumbent upon students to apply those opportunities toward their educational goals.

- Our institutions have the right to expect achievement from students as do our citizens, who have a substantial investment in those admitted to our institutions.

"Failure to choose to respond proactively to change can destine our institutions to indifference and mediocrity."

The obligation of institutions to students does not end with resource allocation and the admission process. It is important that institutions exhibit leadership and good judgment in resource application so that students graduating from postsecondary educational institutions are prepared to succeed in the work place and to contribute to our democratic society.

- Institutions, governing boards and the Commission, through its program review process, share responsibility to evaluate existing and proposed new instructional programs to determine if they are appropriate to role and mission, if they meet the objectives of the institution, and if they meet the needs of students and the state.

- The Commission supports availability of continuing education courses for academic, professional and personal growth within each institution's geographic and programmatic service areas to the extent need can be met with available resources. The Commission expects institutions to avoid unnecessary duplication of continuing education programs.

- Efficiency dictates that institutions identify priority areas to make the best use of limited resources. Through this process, institutions can also review program areas where there is less demand, unnecessary duplication, or inconsistency with institutional objectives. While the primary responsibility to do this rests with the governing boards, the Commission will participate in this process through its program review authority.

The Commission endorses the call to reform and revitalize education at all levels.

- Postsecondary education has a responsibility to assist in the reform of elementary/secondary education by offering exemplary teacher training programs at the appropriate institutions.

- The Commission advises postsecondary educational institutions' governing boards, administrators, and faculty to reexamine their educational programs and ask fundamental questions:

  — What are the attributes of an educated person?

  — What constitutes good undergraduate and graduate education?

— What are the best means to achieve a good education?

— Are our graduates adequately prepared to succeed in society as well as in the work place?

For many students, postsecondary education is synonymous with preparation to enter into and succeed in their chosen career fields. The Commission applauds institutions that wisely use expertise such as business advisory groups to develop curriculum that meets career-oriented education needs. Cooperative programs between education and business can also address employee retraining and upgrading to keep our state work force educated and abreast of changing technologies.

"Preparing Nebraskans for change will prepare them for success."

Education that is intended to develop the "whole person" goes beyond skills and knowledge applicable to the work force. It creates a learning environment that nurtures the intellectual, social, cultural and physical development of students. Such education instills in the student a lifelong commitment to learning. It advances the student's ability to think logically, creatively, and critically; to write and speak clearly; and to compute accurately.

General education, which includes courses in areas such as the arts and humanities, communication, social sciences and history, literature and languages, mathematics and the sciences, help provide these vital elements of postsecondary education. Strong and meaningful general education programs at all postsecondary educational institutions will provide Nebraskans valuable learning experiences that prepare them to be informed, flexible and confident citizens and workers.

- The Commission encourages Nebraska's postsecondary educational institutions to provide leadership and resources that contribute to the enlightenment of the state's citizenry.

- The Commission recognizes the value of general education courses and advocates that degree-seeking students in all institutions, no matter how specialized their programs of study, should receive quality general education as a part of their educational experience. The extent of flexibility for student choices within the general education core needs to be established based on how an institution defines an educated person.

Faculty are at the heart of our institution's instructional roles. Our institutions need diverse faculties comprised of individuals with high academic and/or occupational achievement who have the ability to facilitate learning. Institutions that truly value students also value the faculty who teach, assist and advise those students.

- Faculty, cooperative extension agents, counselors, and others with instructional and instructional support roles, deserve to be encouraged and recognized for outstanding achievement in their area, irrespective of other institutional roles.

- Faculty need to be supported with adequate resources, facilities, salaries and professional development opportunities, including opportunities to understand the diversity of Nebraska.

"Students will choose institutions with a clear understanding of each institution's distinct role and mission.

Research

Our state and nation depend on our postsecondary institutions to conduct research and scholarship that generates new knowledge and technological advances in theory, techniques and products. Research is a part of each institution's role and mission in varying degrees.

At some institutions, particularly the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the University of Nebraska Medical Center, research, both basic and applied, is central to their reason for being. At the State Colleges, research is more closely tied to teaching and directly applicable to the instructional setting or faculty development. Community college research is directly applicable to the classroom or work place.

- The Commission expects each institution to strive for a balance between teaching and research that is appropriate to its distinct mission.

Research means resources and recognition for our institutions. It attracts qualified faculty and provides them with significant professional development opportunities. Research can create new and distinct learning opportunities for the students. Ties between research institutions, industry and the state enhance options for technology transfer and support the state's economic development. Research activities at postsecondary educational institutions can be misunderstood by the general public who do not see its results. The public asks for accountability from these research activities. They question whether research enhances or detracts from our institutions'

instructional roles. Our institutions must regularly respond to these concerns.

- The Commission proposes that, to the extent feasible, faculty scholarly activity and research at all institutions demonstrably enhance teaching.

- The Commission encourages incentives for faculty who bring their research into the instructional setting for the benefit of their students. In addition, the Commission favors processes for hiring and promoting faculty that emphasize the quality of teaching performance as well as research productivity.

- The Commission counsels institutions to take an active role in educating the public about the value and productivity of their research.

"The Commission recognizes the vital role of each educational sector in meeting statewide educational goals."

The Commission recognizes that some valuable research that advances knowledge may not be directly applicable to Nebraska or its citizens. However, much research has practical applications, particularly in the transfer of technology to Nebraska businesses. This technology may translate to new products or services that create new jobs. Such direct results from research will help Nebraskans recognize the value of research to the state's and nation's economy and to their personal quality of life.

- The Commission encourages postsecondary institutions to transfer knowledge and technology produced by research to Nebraska's businesses to increase their competitiveness and promote our state's economy. Goal-oriented, scientific and engineering-related research with high potential for technology transfer are among the most productive in achieving this goal.

- The Commission believes that the state has a role in policy and planning regarding applied research. Institutions, the Legislature, and the Executive Branch are encouraged to formulate a basis for establishing such plans. The Commission sees itself as a partner in this process.

Public Service

All institutions, irrespective of sector, have somewhat similar public service roles that vary based on the differing programs and disciplines available within each institution. Our communities, geographic regions and the state as a whole look to Nebraska's postsecondary educational institutions for leadership and active participation in public service activities.

- Postsecondary educational institutions can avoid isolationism and elitism through concerted efforts to reach out into their communities, serving as active participants in public and community service activities.

- Cooperative public service efforts between and among public and private institutions and other entities are expected. The Commission will facilitate coordination between public, private and independent postsecondary educational institutions to achieve joint efforts.

Often overshadowed by the missions of instruction and research, the Commission sees our institutions' public service missions as vitally important to provide valuable expertise, human resources and cultural activities toward the betterment of our state.

- As a consequence of all sectors having similar public service roles, there is potential for duplication. The Commission urges institutional leaders to identify and review their public service projects to eliminate unwarranted duplication.

The Commission proposes that the educational value of public service for students not be overlooked or discounted. Public service experience can vastly enhance a student's education experience. Among the most far-reaching lessons we can provide our students is an understanding of the satisfaction and rewards of service to others.

- The Commission believes that, when appropriate, public service activities should be incorporated into program curriculum and student activities.

Community Colleges' Role and Mission

Community colleges provide educational options for students seeking entry-level career training that may culminate in an associate degree, diploma or certificate; and/or lower division academic transfer programs.

The community colleges are student-centered, open-access institutions primarily devoted to quality instruction and public service, providing counseling and other student services intended to promote the success of a diverse student population, particularly those who have been traditionally underserved in other educational settings. Often, these students will attend community colleges for purposes other than to obtain a degree, such as for specific job-related training for career advancement.

- The community college programmatic service area, as defined in statute by role and mission, includes:

  — The first instructional and service priority shall be applied technology and occupational education, and, when necessary, foundations education, which includes developmental and remedial education.

  — The second instructional and service priority of the community colleges shall be transfer education, including general academic transfer programs, or applied technology and occupational programs which may be applicable to the first two years of a bachelor's degree program, and, when necessary, foundations education, which includes developmental and remedial education.

  — The third instructional and service priority of the community colleges shall be public service, particularly adult continuing education for occupations and professions, economic and community development focused on customized occupational assessment and job training programs for business and communities, and avocational and personal development courses.

  — The fourth instructional and service priority of the community colleges shall be applied research.

Instruction

Community colleges provide an array of one and two-year career programs designed to enable graduates to enter the job market immediately upon graduation. However, while community colleges are the sole public source for many of these career programs, that does not mean that the state or its other political subdivisions can afford to provide every career program through a community college.

- Community colleges need to evaluate existing and proposed new career programs to determine if they comply with institutional objectives, meet student and state needs, and do not constitute unnecessary duplication. While this is an essential responsibility of the institutions, the Commission will participate in this process through its program review responsibility. Within the context of limited state resources and unnecessary duplication of services, the private career institutions will be viewed as another career program resource in this process.

- In providing continuing education within their geographic service areas, the community colleges need to coordinate with other public and private institutions within their geographic service areas to avoid unnecessary duplication.

The Commission understands that many students choose community colleges with the desire to achieve or improve employability quickly. They want specific, job-oriented training that will lead directly to employment or will upgrade their knowledge and skills. The Commission advises community colleges to counsel these students regarding the value of general education courses. While training courses are vital to community college career programs, graduates will need retraining throughout their lives to stay abreast of emerging technologies in their career fields. While the employment-related courses may give students the opportunity to "get their foot in the door" in the job market, general education courses will be instrumental in enabling them to advance and succeed.

- The Commission encourages community colleges to provide a core of high quality, general education courses which permeate all of their programs of study. Ideally, all degree-seeking students would complete a general education component as a part of their educational experience.

The increased availability of academic transfer programs at community colleges permits community colleges to play a larger role as feeder institutions into four-year colleges and universities and will, at the same time, contribute to the intellect of our state's work force.

- Each community college campus shall have the prerogative to offer any instructional program, academic or career-oriented, up to the associate degree level that is within their human, fiscal and physical abilities; meets the needs of students and the state; and receives approval by the Commission.

- The Commission is encouraged by the progress being made in articulation between Nebraska institutions and urges two- and four-year institutions to continue development of a broadly accepted articulation policy where an AA or AS degree from a community college will be accepted to meet the lower division general education requirements of the State Colleges, the University of Nebraska, and the independent colleges and universities.

The question of whether a postsecondary education is a privilege or a right has been debated for decades and certainly the Commission will not resolve it. Nonetheless, it is not a student's right to enter an institution unprepared or under-prepared. Under-prepared students are likely to fail, which is of no service to the time and expense of the students or the physical, human and financial resources of the institutions. Coordinated postsecondary education begins with the student and with the well-being of that student, along with the reality that the institution concurrently is measured by its outcomes.

Being unprepared initially to succeed at the four-year college level does not mean that a four-year college degree is unobtainable. In a coordinated postsecondary education system, under-prepared students will enroll in community college developmental courses that will help prepare them to reach their educational aspirations. Developmental/remedial programs at the postsecondary level are actually pre-college level courses designed to correct skills deficiencies in writing, reading and mathematics that are essential for college study. Such courses often feature low student/teacher ratios or independent study options that allow opportunities for one-on-one assistance from instructors. No credit toward degree completion is granted for developmental/remedial programs.

The Commission endorses the following guidelines for the delivery of developmental/remedial programs:

- Community colleges have the primary responsibility to provide developmental education courses for students who are under-prepared for college-level work.

- Community colleges may offer developmental courses through cooperative arrangements with the State Colleges and Universities. The arrangements may include offering the community college developmental courses on the campus of the State Colleges and University.

    — Student survival skills courses such as study skills, library skills and tutoring are not to be defined as developmental courses. Community colleges, as well as State Colleges and the University of Nebraska, are encouraged to continue to offer these survival skills courses for their students.

- In considering new instructional programs, research projects and public service activities, each community college area is advised to assess if an actual unmet need exists and assign that need a priority. If it has sufficient priority, the community college can then direct responsibility for meeting that need to the campus that is best able to meet the need. Geographic access; financial, human and physical resources; and institutional expertise should all be considered in selecting the appropriate campus.

Community colleges also enhance our state's economic development efforts through cooperative education efforts with businesses that provide on-the-job and/or pre-employment training, skills upgrading and occupational assessment. In meeting this need, community colleges are structured to allow flexibility and rapid responsiveness which is necessary in light of the realities of the marketplace.

- The Commission supports community colleges' continued efforts to pursue cooperative education and training efforts, as well as technical assistance programs, with businesses and communities to support the economic development of their geographic service areas. Commission procedures will include provisions to enable community colleges to meet these needs quickly and effectively.

Research

Applied research is the fourth and last priority of community colleges. Community colleges do not serve as a principal source of research in our state.

- Research activities at community colleges generally are limited to the enhancement of the instructional programs, public service activities, and technical assistance programs or relate to faculty professional development.

Public Service

Community colleges provide many public services within their geographic service areas, including economic development, cultural awareness, personal and professional development and community activities. Their active public service, responsiveness to community needs and local tax-supported funding base have contributed to their perception as true "community-based" institutions.

- The Commission sees economic development within their geographic service area as an important and continuing function of a community college's public service role.

- The Commission supports community colleges' continued efforts to develop and use instructional technologies to make their educational and training programs more accessible within their service areas.

- The Commission views public service as valuable to a student's education and encourages community colleges to incorporate it into programming whenever it is relevant and appropriate.

- The community colleges shall have responsibility to provide public service activities in their geographic service areas that are within the scope and limitation of their resources and subject to review by the Coordinating Commission.

Geographic Service Areas

- Community colleges shall serve the educational needs of their geographic service areas unless Commission procedures permit services outside of their service areas (see Table 1, page 3-16, and Map, page 3-17).

Peer Groups

A peer institution is one which is representative of the institution to which it is compared.

- Peer groups will be used for budget and program review as well as for other comparisons that will aid in Commission decision-making. The Commission's purposes for the use of peer groups are not to influence the collective bargaining process.

- The Commission has identified the following as appropriate peer lists for each of the community college areas:

Metropolitan Community College

Aims Community College, Greeley, Colorado
Casper College, Casper, Wyoming
Central Community College, Grand Island, Nebraska
Central Texas College, Killeen, Texas
Delgado Community College, Delgado Louisiana
Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Linn-Benton Community College, Albany, Oregon
San Jacinto College, Pasadena, Texas
Seminole Community College, Sanford, Florida
Southeast Community College, Lincoln, Nebraska

Northeast Community College

Colorado Northwestern Community College, Rangely, Colorado
Dodge City Community College, Dodge City, Kansas
Eastern Arizona College, Thatcher, Arizona
Iowa Lakes Community College, Estherville, Iowa
Laramie County Community College, Cheyenne, Wyoming
Mid-Plains Community College, North Platte, Nebraska
North Idaho College, Coeur D'Alene, Idaho
Paris Junior College, Paris, Texas
Southeastern Illinois College, Harrisburg, Illinois

Western Nebraska Community College

Bee County College, Beeville, Texas
Dodge City Community College, Dodge City, Kansas
Glenn Oaks Community College, Centerville, Michigan
Iowa Lakes Community College, Estherville Iowa
Mid-Plains Community College, North Platte, Nebraska
Northwest Community College, Powell, Wyoming
Paris Junior College, Paris, Texas
San Juan College, Farmington, New Mexico
Sheridan College, Sheridan, Wyoming

Central Community College

Metropolitan Community College, Omaha, Nebraska
Trinity Valley Community College, Athens, Texas
Southeastern Community College, W. Burlington, Iowa
Southeast Community College, Lincoln, Nebraska
Northcentral Technical College, Wausau, Wisconsin
Moraine Park Technical College, Fond Du Lac, Wisconsin
Mid-Plains Community College, North Platte, Nebraska
Indian Hills Community College, Ottumwa, Iowa
Fox Valley Technical College, Appleton, Wisconsin
Laramie County Community College, Cheyenne Wyoming

Mid-Plains Community College

Carl Sandburg College, Galesburg, Illinois
College of Southern Idaho, Twin Falls, Idaho
Dodge City Community College, Dodge City, Kansas
Indian Hills Community College, Ottumwa, Iowa
North Idaho College, Coeur D'Alene, Idaho
Paris Junior College, Paris, Texas
San Juan Community College, Farmington, New Mexico
Sauk Valley Community College, Dixon, Illinois
Southeastern Community College, W. Burlington, Iowa
Western Community College, Scottsbluff, Nebraska

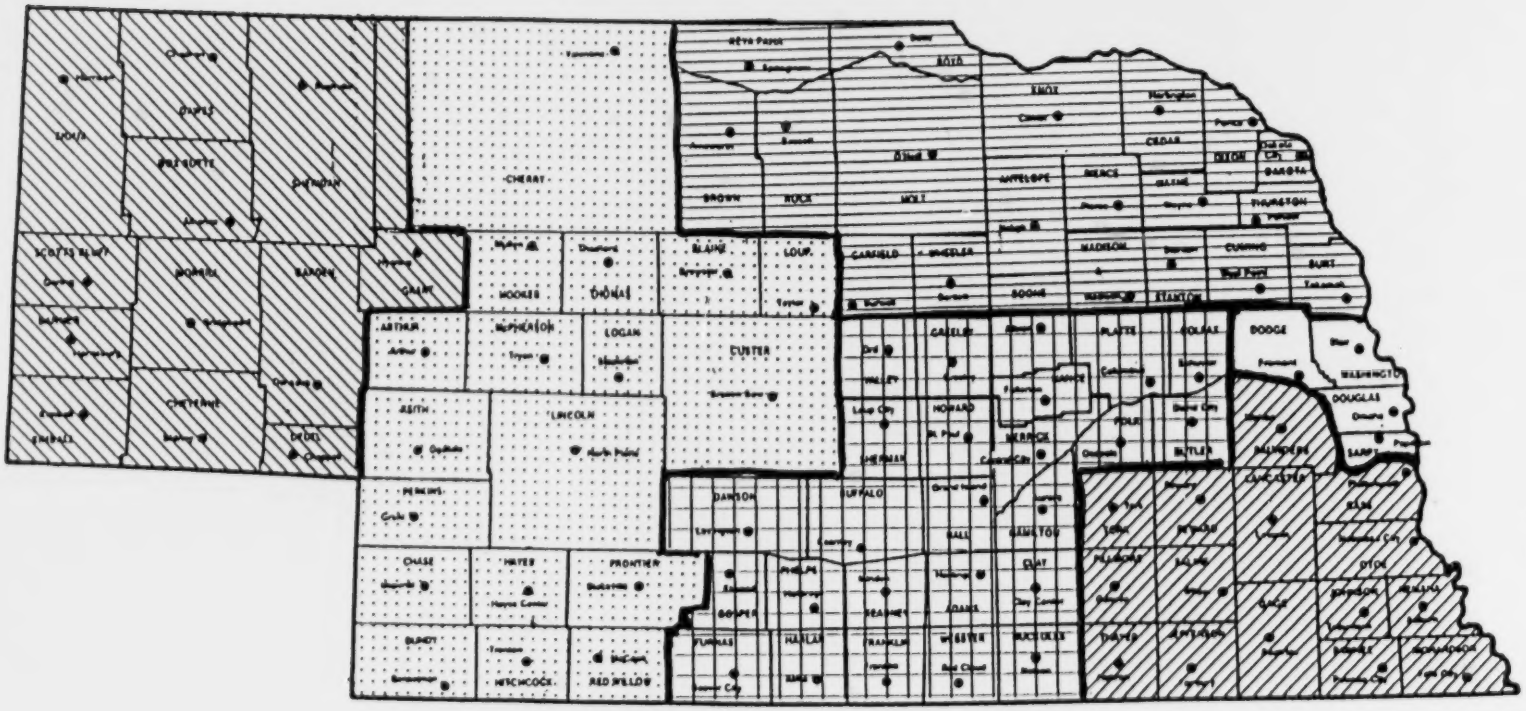
Southeast Community College

Aims Community College, Greeley, Colorado
Casper College, Casper, Wyoming
Central Community College, Grand Island, Nebraska
Fox Valley Technical College, Appleton, Wisconsin
Indian Hills Community College, Ottumwa, Iowa
Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa
Metropolitan Community College, Omaha, Nebraska
Trinity Valley Community College, Athens, Texas

TABLE 1
NEBRASKA'S PUBLIC COMMUNITY COLLEGES

NAME OF INSTITUTION	CAMPUSES	AREA COUNTIES
Central Community College	Grand Island, Hastings, Platte (Columbus)	Furnas, Harlan, Franklin, Webster, Nuckolls, Gosper, Phelps, Kearney, Adams, Clay, Dawson, Buffalo, Hall, Hamilton, Sherman, Howard, Merrick, Polk, Butler Colfax, Platte, Nance, Greeley, Valley, Boone
Metropolitan Community College	Elkhorn Valley, South Omaha, Fort Omaha	Sarpy, Douglas, Washington, Dodge
Mid-Plains Community College	Vocational/Technical (North Platte), McDonald-Belton (North Platte), McCook Community College	Dundy, Hitchcock, Red Willow, Frontier, Hayes, Chase, Perkins, Keith Lincoln, Custer, Logan, McPherson, Arthur, Hooker, Thomas, Blaine, Loup, Cherry
Northeast Community College	Norfolk	Garfield, Wheeler, Boone, Madison, Stanton, Cuming, Burt, Thurston, Dakota, Wayne, Dixon, Cedar, Pierce, Antelope, Knox, Holt, Boyd, Keya Paha, Rock, Brown
Southeast Community College	Beatrice, Lincoln, Milford	Thayer, Jefferson, Gage, Pawnee, Richardson, Johnson, Nemaha, Otoe, Cass, Lancaster, Saline, Fillmore, York, Seward, Saunders
Western Community College	Scottsbluff, Sidney	Grant, Deuel, Cheyenne, Kimball, Banner, Morrill, Garden, Scottsbluff, Sioux, Box Butte, Sheridan, Dawes, and the western edge of Cherry

COMMUNITY COLLEGE SECTOR



- Central Community College
- Metropolitan Community College
- Mid Plains Community College
- Northeast Community College
- Southeast Community College
- Western Community College

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State Colleges' Role and Mission

> *"As each institution defines its distinct role within the system, each will identify the students, programs and services most appropriate to its mission."*

The State Colleges at Chadron, Peru and Wayne are regional institutions providing educational programs and public service that serve characteristics indigenous to their service areas. While State Colleges historically have served "traditional-age" students, they have expanded to also meet needs of non-traditional students, often place-bound individuals seeking professional and personal development.

- The State Colleges' programmatic service areas, collectively and individually, as defined in statute, include:

  — As their first instructional priority, the provision of baccalaureate general academic, occupational and education degree programs;

  — As their second instructional priority, to provide master's programs in education and other disciplines authorized by the Legislature and the Commission;

  — As their third priority, applied research, public service activities and continuing education activities to their geographic service areas, except in programs where such colleges have the ability to provide a particular service on a statewide basis.

  — Delivery of academic transfer and preprofessional associate degree programs for which a degree may be awarded if approved by the Board of Trustees of the Nebraska State Colleges and the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, and upon demonstration of a compelling need and unique capacity of the State College to offer such a program. However, the Commission believes that this is a less needed function of a State College and is best deferred to community colleges whenever possible. This factor will be strongly considered in the review of new program proposals.

- The State Colleges are assigned certain responsibilities within their role and mission that are appropriate to more than one of their institutions. In considering new instructional programs, research projects and public service activities, the Commission advises the Board of Trustees of the State Colleges to first assess if an actual unmet need exists and assign that need a priority. If it has sufficient priority, the Board could then direct responsibility for meeting that need to the State College that is best able to meet the need. Geographic access; financial, human and physical

resources; and institutional expertise would all be considered in selecting the appropriate institution.

Instruction

The State Colleges have evolved from their earlier role as teacher's colleges into more comprehensive institutions that provide diverse educational opportunities to their region. The Commission understands this evolution, but does not want to see expansion exceed capacity or quality.

"Motivation is a key element in the promotion of excellence."

- State Colleges will best serve the people of the state if they continue to focus on programs and services that have the broadest implications and demand within their region. Limited resources demand that no institution attempt to meet all needs.

- State Colleges need to evaluate existing and proposed new instructional programs to determine if they comply with institutional objectives, meet student and state needs, and do not constitute unnecessary duplication. While this is an essential responsibility of the institutions, the Commission will participate in this process through its program review responsibility.

- The Commission proposes that teacher education, business, and liberal arts education leading to a baccalaureate degree should continue to be the major emphasis of State Colleges.

- The Commission recognizes the value of general education courses and believes they should permeate all undergraduate education at the State Colleges. Ideally, each college should provide a core of general education courses to enhance intellectual exploration, inquiry, and personal responsibility that provide a foundation for all other programs.

- The Commission counsels that graduate level courses be proposed only when they are within the role and mission and available resources of the institutions. While certain master's degrees are permitted at the State College level, the Commission does not prescribe having them widely available at the institutions. An emphasis on graduate level education would likely pull the institutions away from providing education that serves their broadest constituency most effectively.

- The Commission believes, under most circumstances, developmental education is more appropriate at community colleges than at State

Colleges. When possible, students who are academically under-prepared to succeed at the State Colleges would instead be admitted to developmental education classes taught by a community college, possibly through a cooperative arrangement with the State College.

— Student survival skills courses such as study skills, library skills and tutoring are not to be defined as developmental courses. State Colleges, as well as community colleges and the University of Nebraska, are encouraged to continue to offer these survival skills courses for their students.

- The Commission supports the State Colleges' efforts to provide continuing education opportunities to their region as long as they are within the institution's role and mission and don't represent unnecessary duplication.

Research

Teaching shall remain the primary focus of State Colleges. Research at State Colleges is strongly linked to and supportive of the State Colleges' emphasis on undergraduate instruction.

- Research that enhances the State Colleges' regional roles and is within their mission is appropriate, as their third priority, but shall not supplant the State College's emphasis on teaching.

- The Commission favors research at the State Colleges that is integral to and supportive of instruction.

- Since research is not a primary focus of State Colleges, the Commission believes it should not be a primary focus of faculty, nor does the Commission suggest faculty should be evaluated principally based on research productivity.

Public Service

The State Colleges are recognized for the significant public service role they provide in the educational, cultural, and economic development of their service areas. State Colleges meet their public service mission with emphasis on educational outreach programs, cultural enrichment programs and assistance to the businesses and communities of their geographic region of the state.

- Each State College needs to identify strengths and capabilities within its role and mission that best serve its region's public service needs.

- Like research, public service activities that are integral to and supportive of instruction are favored by the Commission.

- The State Colleges shall have responsibility to provide regional public service activities within the scope and limitation of their resources and subject to review by the Coordinating Commission.

- The Commission encourages State Colleges to use distance learning and instructional technologies to the best effect possible within available resources to provide access to educational, cultural and personal development activities within their regions.

Geographic Service Areas

- State Colleges shall serve the educational needs of their geographic areas (see Map, page 3-22). Negotiated services outside the programmatic/ geographic service areas are also permitted in accordance with Commission rules and procedures.

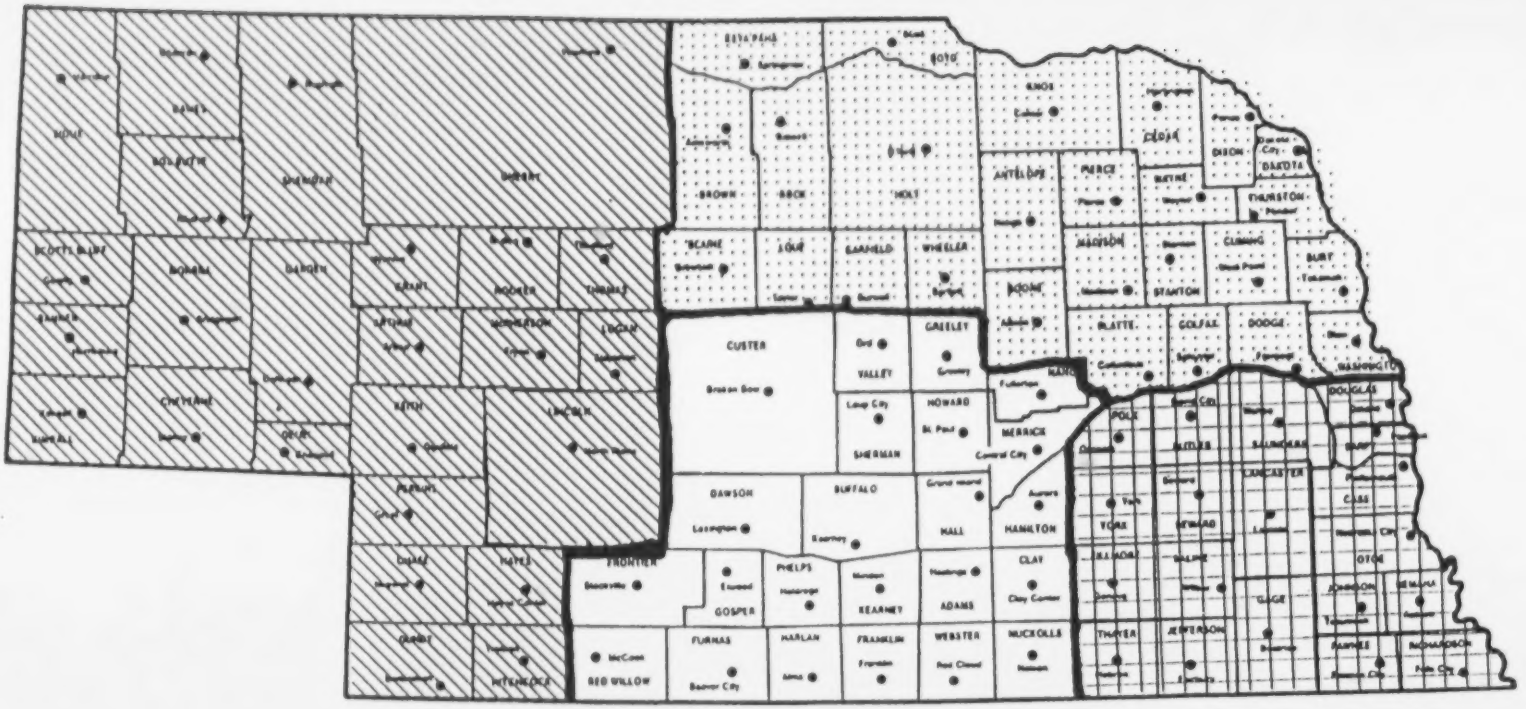
Peer Groups

A peer institution is one which is representative of the institution to which it is compared.

- Peer groups will be used for budget and program review as well as for other comparisons that will aid in Commission decision-making. The Commission's purposes for the use of peer groups are not to influence the collective bargaining process.

- The Commission has identified appropriate peer lists for each of the three State Colleges. The lists are detailed later in this section.

STATE COLLEGE SECTOR



Chadron State College
Peru State College
Wayne State College

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Chadron State College

Chadron State College is classified as a Master's College/University I. Chadron State College's programmatic service area includes baccalaureate level liberal arts and occupational degree programs and professional degree programs in education.

- The primary focus of Chadron State College's educational programs shall be high quality, comprehensive undergraduate programs leading to a baccalaureate degree in arts and sciences, business and teacher education.

- Chadron State College shall limit new baccalaureate degree programs to the specific needs of its service area.

- The Commission does not foresee immediate need for expansion of graduate-level offerings. Chadron State College currently offers the Masters in Education, the Educational Specialist degree, and the Master of Business Administration.

Geographic Service Area

- Chadron State's service area encompasses most of western Nebraska and includes the counties of Hitchcock, Dundy, Chase, Hayes, Perkins, Keith, Deuel, Cheyenne, Kimball, Banner, Morrill, Scottsbluff, Sioux, Dawes, Box Butte, Sheridan, Garden, Cherry, Grant, Hooker, Thomas, Arthur, McPherson, Logan and Lincoln.

Peer List

A peer institution is one which is representative of the institution to which it is compared. The peer institutions for Chadron State College are as follows:

Eastern New Mexico University, Portales, New Mexico
Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas
Lander University, Greenwood, South Carolina
North Georgia College, Dahlonega, Georgia
Northern State University, Aberdeen, South Dakota
Northwestern Oklahoma State University, Alva, Oklahoma
Southern Arkansas University, Magnolia, Arkansas
Southern Oregon State College, Ashland, Oregon
Southwest State University, Marshall, Minnesota
University of North Carolina at Pembroke, Pembroke, North Carolina

Peru State College

Peru State College is classified as a Baccalaureate College II, based on the Carnegie classification system. Peru State College offers undergraduate programs leading to a baccalaureate degree in arts and sciences, and business and teacher education.

- In fulfilling its instructional mission, Peru State College shall continue to focus on high quality undergraduate programs leading to a baccalaureate degree in arts and sciences, business and teacher education, enhanced by a coherent general education program.

- Peru State College may continue to offer the Masters of Education degree.

- Peru State College shall limit new baccalaureate programs to the specific needs of its service area.

Geographic Service Area

- Peru State's geographic service area encompasses much of southeast Nebraska and includes the counties of Richardson, Pawnee, Nemaha, Johnson, Otoe, Cass, Lancaster, Gage, Jefferson, Thayer, Fillmore, Saline, Seward, York, Polk, Butler, Saunders, Sarpy and Douglas.

Peer List

A peer institution is one which is representative of the institution to which it is compared. The peer institutions for Peru State College are as follows:

Black Hills State College, Spearfish, South Dakota
Concord College, Athens, West Virginia
Dakota State University, Madison, South Dakota
Dickinson State University, Dickinson, North Dakota
Indiana University-east, Richmond, Indiana
Northwestern Oklahoma State University, Alva, Oklahoma
Southwest State University, Marshall, Minnesota
University of Arkansas-Monticello, Monticello, Arkansas
University of South Carolina at Aiken, Aiken, South Carolina
Western State College-Colorado, Gunnison, Colorado

Wayne State College

Wayne State College is classified as a Master's College/University I. The College has grown from its tradition as a teacher's college to offer a comprehensive curriculum with balanced emphasis on the arts and sciences, business and teacher education.

- Wayne State College's primary emphasis shall be high quality, comprehensive undergraduate programs leading to a baccalaureate degree in arts and sciences, business and teacher education.

- Wayne State College shall limit new baccalaureate programs to the specific needs of its service area.

- The Commission does not foresee immediate need for expansion of graduate-level offerings. Wayne State College currently offers the Masters in Education, the Educational Specialist degree and the Master of Business Administration.

Geographic Service Area

- Wayne State College's service area encompasses northeast and much of north central Nebraska and includes the counties of Washington, Dodge, Colfax, Platte, Boone, Madison, Stanton, Cuming, Burt, Holt, Thurston, Dakota, Dixon, Cedar, Wayne, Pierce, Knox, Antelope, Boyd, Wheeler, Garfield, Loup, Blaine, Brown, Rock and Keya Paha.

Peer List

A peer institution is one which is representative of the institution to which it is compared. The peer institutions for Wayne State College are as follows:

Bemidji State University, Bemidji, Minnesota
Eastern New Mexico University, Portales, New Mexico
Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas
Georgia Southwestern State University, Americus, Georgia
Minot State University, Minot, North Dakota
Northern State University, Aberdeen, South Dakota
Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Durant, Oklahoma
Southern Arkansas University, Magnolia, Arkansas
Southern Oregon State College, Ashland, Oregon

University of Nebraska Role and Mission

The University of Nebraska provides extensive, comprehensive postsecondary education to Nebraska citizens through its four campuses: The University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the University of Nebraska at Omaha, the University of Nebraska at Kearney and the University of Nebraska Medical Center. While they share some common missions, each performs a different role.

Each institution has a distinct heritage. The heritage of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln is that of a land-grant institution. For the University of Nebraska at Kearney, it is that of a former State College. The University of Nebraska at Omaha's heritage is urban, with the needs of the Omaha metropolitan area its primary concern. The University of Nebraska Medical Center has a heritage of specialization in health education.

These differing heritages have helped create each institution's distinct personality. The Commission sees no basis to suggest they grow into something that does not reflect these heritages.

- The University of Nebraska's programmatic service area, based on statute, includes:

  — The University of Nebraska is engaged in instruction, research and public service. These three parts of the University's mission are interdependent. However, when viewed in its entirety, the University's first priority shall be undergraduate instruction (with the exception of UNMC and the Cooperative Extension Division), the University's second priority shall be graduate and professional instruction and research, and the University's third priority shall be public service.

  — The University of Nebraska shall have responsibility for graduate programs at the specialist and master's degree level and all baccalaureate professional programs throughout the public sector of postsecondary education in Nebraska, with the exception of programs in education and other areas authorized for the State Colleges by the Legislature and Coordinating Commission.

  — The University of Nebraska shall have primary responsibility for instruction in agriculture and natural resources and primary statewide responsibility for research and public service in agriculture and natural resources.

— The University of Nebraska shall have sole responsibility for doctoral, first professional, cooperative extension programs, and other degree programs and services specifically provided for by law. The first professional degrees offered by the University of Nebraska shall be in medicine, law, dentistry, pharmacy and architecture.

— The University of Nebraska shall have sole responsibility for baccalaureate, first professional, master's and doctoral programs in the health professions to include medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, nursing and allied health professions, with the exception of the baccalaureate programs in allied health professions established at the State Colleges.

— The University of Nebraska may continue to offer associate degrees in agriculturally-related fields at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture at Curtis and the Associate Degree in Engineering Technology.

- The University of Nebraska is assigned certain responsibilities within its role and mission that are appropriate to more than one of its institutions. In considering new instructional programs, research projects and public service activities, the University first is advised to assess if an actual unmet need exists and assign that need a priority. If it has sufficient priority, the University could then direct responsibility for meeting that need to the institution that is best able to meet the need. Geographic access; financial, human and physical resources; and institutional expertise should all be considered in selecting the appropriate institution.

- The Commission sees a close relationship between research and public service in support of instruction at University institutions. Concurrently, research and public service individually offer potential for the betterment of the University, the community, the state and society.

Instruction

- Within its three-part mission of instruction, research and public service, the over-arching mission of the University is to serve as a teaching institution.

Nebraska expects the University will provide the state with educated and competent graduates who form the nucleus of a professional, skilled and progressive work force; provide leadership for our state's businesses,

communities and government; and who become good citizens of our state. The state also expects the University to provide education of the caliber to challenge, stimulate and empower Nebraska's students to excel. Together, these expectations have created the demand for a broad, all encompassing, high quality, comprehensive university when, unfortunately, the resources to do so are limited.

"Coordinated postsecondary education in Nebraska permits institutions an opportunity to advance from general adequacy to more specific, targeted superiority."

- As resources become more limited and student needs more diverse, the University, along with the other public sectors, needs to identify priorities within its institutions to develop and strengthen into areas of superiority. At the same time, it will become necessary for the University to identify those programs for which there is less need or that are more appropriately offered at other institutions or in other sectors. Through this process, the University can reallocate its resources to provide exemplary programs and services that best meet the needs of Nebraska as it enters into the twenty-first century.

  — The University of Nebraska is encouraged to more fully consider how it might use telecommunications to extend access to its programs and courses.

- The Commission encourages the University to identify and prioritize areas of strength and develop them into truly exemplary programs within our region and nation. The Commission will assist in this process by use of program and budget review.

- The University has the clear responsibility for providing doctorate programs within Nebraska's public postsecondary educational system. These programs are important to the state's future economic, social and cultural development. However, it is important that the University and the Commission, through its program review and approval authority, evaluate existing and proposed doctoral programs and prepare to make needed adjustments as economic, social and technological priorities change.

  — Although it is a comprehensive state university, the resources of the state will not allow the University to develop doctoral programs in each of the disciplines that the University offers at the undergraduate level at each institution.

— When new doctoral programs are deemed appropriate by the University, the Commission advises the University to consider which of its institutions is most capable of providing the program and will best serve the needs of the students and the state.

- The Commission shall exercise its statutory oversight responsibilities to avoid unnecessary duplication due to replicating full graduate programs at University campuses. Substantially reproducing graduate programs of one campus at another campus is establishment of a new instructional program at the second campus.

  — The opportunity for more doctoral level degrees without a major expenditure of Nebraska's public funds will be available through private institutions and multi-state higher education compacts, in some cases involving cooperative agreements with the University of Nebraska.

Exemplary programs created by setting priorities will enhance the University's reputation by attracting to the state the most talented students. The programs will also contribute to the state's economic development by providing resources for businesses which are associated with certain disciplinary strengths. Not all priority programs will have such immediate, measurable payback, yet they may still be valuable and worthy of development.

To become a stronger institution, the University also needs students who are capable of sharing in and contributing to its goals. Students who are unprepared for the rigor and climate of a research institution remain on the periphery. Neither the student nor the institutions fulfill the needs of the other in this scenario. Higher admission standards will do much to assure that students at the University are prepared to succeed and contribute to the institution.

- The Commission believes, under most circumstances, developmental education for under-prepared students is more appropriate at community colleges than at the University. When possible, under-prepared persons wishing to attend the University would be directed into courses offered by a community college, possibly on the University campus.

— Student survival skills courses such as study skills, library skills and tutoring are not to be defined as developmental. The University of Nebraska, as well as community colleges and State Colleges, are encouraged to continue to offer these survival skills courses for their students.

Research

The state of Nebraska relies on the University of Nebraska institutions as a source of research that advances knowledge and technology, serves the state's economic development goals, and enhances Nebraskans' quality of life. However, each institution within the University system defines its role of research differently.

- While instruction is the primary focus of the University, the Commission supports and encourages continuation of fruitful research that advances knowledge, strengthens the University, and benefits the state and its citizens.

Research and creative activity of a historical, artistic or more philosophical nature enhance the quality of our lives, of our understanding of ourselves, and of our civic and cultural environment.

- The Commission encourages the University to target its research efforts at specific, priority areas that could become exemplary, attracting both research funds and research-oriented students to the institution and state.

- Where research extensively relies on an infusion of state funds, there is a need to prioritize research due to limited state resources. The Commission supports research that is tied to instruction and public service, that serves the state of Nebraska, and that can be adequately funded and supported by the institutions as the first research priority. This certainly does not preclude research that fails to meet these three criteria, but does encourage institutional activities that do meet these criteria.

- Technology transfer and other commercial interactions which support existing industries and help the state attract new businesses merit focused attention by the University.

- The Commission believes research needs should be directed to the University institution that is most capable of meeting them, taking into

consideration human, fiscal and physical resources; areas of expertise; and the institution's geographic service area.

Public Service

The University provides many public services to the state. As a primary source of knowledge, technology, cultural activities, research and human resources, the University, quite correctly, often is looked to for leadership and participation in community, regional and statewide issues. Extension services provided through UNL are a statewide public service of the University. Through UNMC, the University also serves as a vital resource for rural health care training and information.

The University also provides a valuable public service to the state through its fine art centers, museums, performing art centers and other activities.

- The Commission encourages a continued emphasis on partnerships between the University and businesses, agencies and communities throughout the state that contribute to the "good life" we enjoy in Nebraska.

- In most instances, the Commission expects public service at the University to be tied to and supportive of instruction. However, there are instances where public service must stand alone for the betterment of the University, the community, the state and society.

- In meeting its public service role, the University can strive to provide its students with an opportunity to participate in such activities.

- The Commission encourages the University, to the extent its resources permit, to support its fine art centers, museums, performing art centers and other activities that provide cultural and educational resources to the citizens of the state as well as students of the institutions.

- The University of Nebraska's service area for public service activities shall be statewide within the scope and limitation of its resources and subject to review by the Coordinating Commission.

- The Commission views telecommunications and other distance learning technologies as an educational and public service function of the University. The Commission encourages the University to use instructional technology to the best extent possible within available

resources to provide citizens, students and faculty access to educational, cultural and personal development activities.

Geographic Service Area

Except in those program areas where they have statewide responsibility, the University of Nebraska's four campuses shall serve the educational needs of their geographic areas. Negotiated services outside the programmatic/ geographic service areas are permitted in accordance with Commission rules and procedures (see Map, page 3-33).

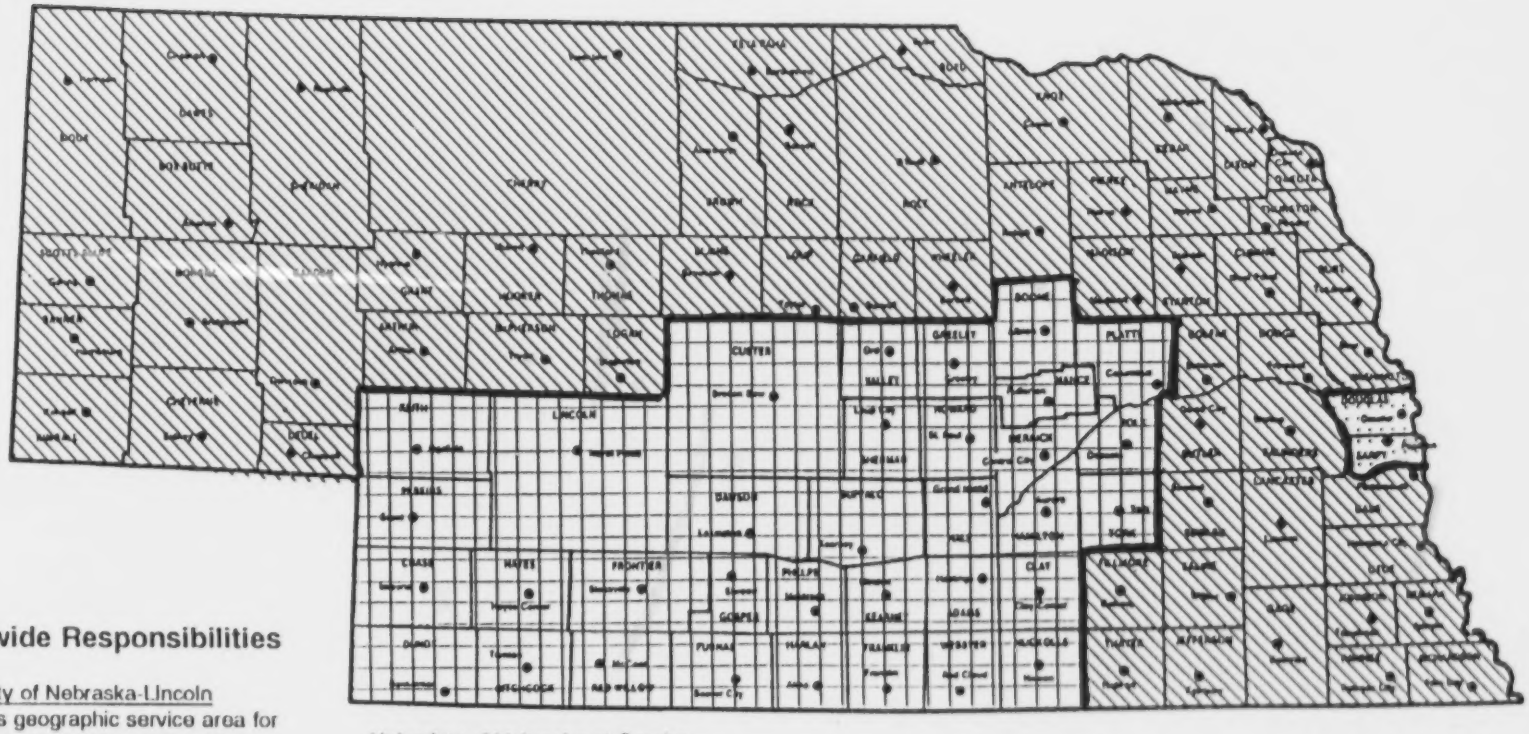
Peer Groups

A peer institution is one which is representative of the institution to which it is compared.

- Peer groups will be used for budget and program review as well as for other comparisons that will aid in Commission decision-making. The Commission's purposes for the use of peer groups are not to influence the collective bargaining process.

- The Commission has identified appropriate peer lists for each of the University of Nebraska's four institutions. The lists are identified in the section that follows.

UNIVERSITY SECTOR



Statewide Responsibilities

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

- UNL's geographic service area for off-campus instruction and public service programs related to agriculture, engineering and other fields where UNL offers unique public postsecondary programs shall be the entire state.

University of Nebraska Medical Center

- UNMC has statewide responsibilities in the areas of health care education.

Univeristy of Nebraska at Omaha

- For off-campus instruction and for public service in urban-related programs, UNO's geographic service area shall be the entire state.

- UNO has statewide responsibility for graduate-level programs in Criminal Justice, Social Work, Gerontology and Public Administration.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln
University of Nebraska at Omaha
University of Nebraska at Kearney

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University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL)

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln serves as the most comprehensive public University for the state of Nebraska, providing an array of courses and career options for its undergraduate and graduate-level students. It is also the state's only Carnegie Research I institution.

Instruction

Due to UNL's longstanding comprehensiveness and its land- grant origin, many Nebraskans have assumed it is their "birthright" to attend UNL. This mindset has placed unreasonable expectations on UNL to be everything to everyone. Likewise, there has been the unreasonable expectation of many Nebraska students, no matter what their level of academic preparation, that they have the right to succeed or fail at UNL. The Commission believes it is appropriate that many people attend UNL at some point in their educational career. But to believe that UNL is the right place for everyone to go initially in their postsecondary education experience is inaccurate.

The Commission has called for community colleges to serve as feeder institutions into the state's four-year colleges and universities. As this becomes more prevalent in the state, UNL will have the opportunity to focus more of its human and fiscal resources on junior, senior and graduate level education, as is fitting a senior-level institution. This process will facilitate development of quality-driven niches of excellence within its mission of instruction.

- The ability of UNL to set priorities and to target areas of strength will advance UNL's evolution as an exemplary institution throughout our region and nation. UNL's educational programs can be strengthened through the following changes in focus:

  — UNL needs to identify areas of priority in its program offerings and focus on providing an exemplary educational experience to its students in those areas.

  — The Commission anticipates UNL accepting more community college transfer students who enter UNL at the junior level.

  — Increased focus on upper-level course work (junior, senior, graduate level) at UNL will result in stronger programs and bring UNL increased national recognition.

- UNL shall have primary responsibility for fulfilling the University of Nebraska's statewide responsibility for instruction in agriculture and natural resources and primary statewide responsibility for research and public service in agriculture and natural resources.

- The Commission foresees UNL remaining the primary doctoral degree granting institution in the state for fields outside the health professions. The Commission expects that new graduate programs be developed only when a definite need exists, when UNL has demonstrated the superior capacity to meet that need, and when resources are available.

- The Commission sees UNL as the principal provider of graduate-level programs except when another institution has the human and fiscal resources and a more compelling need within their geographic service area.

- UNL's instructional role includes outreach programs through continuing education and cooperative extension programs. However, it must assure it is not duplicating continuing education efforts already available to citizens of the state through their regional State College, or local community college or other University of Nebraska campuses. This is an important coordinative function that best can be achieved through institutional diligence.

- UNL's primary role is instruction. Therefore, the Commission urges UNL to support, recognize, and reward faculty for achievement in the classroom.

Higher admission standards at UNL will help alleviate the problem of under-prepared students at UNL, but will not totally solve it. The Commission has stated that developmental education for under-prepared students is most appropriately provided by community colleges.

- Those who seek enrollment and are under-prepared or are enrolled at UNL and need developmental courses, when possible, would be directed into courses offered through a community college, possibly on the UNL campus.

- The Commission supports UNL's efforts to recruit Nebraska's top students. This will help meet Nebraska's needs for a professional,

knowledgeable work force to enable the state to be more economically competitive.

Research

Research is integral to UNL's mission, particularly at the graduate level. Research and scholarship that is directly applicable to the classroom or that transfers new and emerging technologies to industry most easily demonstrates measurable results and practical, direct usage. Efforts such as the Nebraska Research Initiative Centers, the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the Center for Great Plains Studies, the Nebraska State Museum, the University Press, and interdisciplinary centers promote research while at the same time directly serving the state's economy and meeting the needs of our citizens. Basic research that advances our general core of knowledge is also essential to our institutions and our society as a whole.

- UNL's research mission must not over-shadow its primary mission of instruction. The Commission believes that instead, when possible, research ideally would support and enhance teaching and benefit students.

- UNL must be cognizant of the public's concern for accountability, especially in areas of research where the public is sometimes less likely to see immediate results or direct impact on the students or the state. Therefore, it is advisable that, whenever possible, the public be made aware of the direct benefits of Nebraska research.

- The Commission encourages UNL to continue to promote collaborative research with business, government and other institutions that lead to the transfer of technology to benefit Nebraska.

Public Service

UNL has statewide responsibility for serving Nebraskans through cooperative extension services in every area of the state. It also provides public service to citizens, businesses and communities through its extensive and diverse continuing education programs. Telecommunications provide an excellent tool for enhancing access for both of these services.

UNL's museums, fine art centers, and performing arts centers all greatly enhance the cultural opportunities of Nebraska's citizens and are viewed as a major public service to the state.

- The coordinated use of instructional technologies as one of the delivery systems for UNL's cooperative extension services and extended education programs is supported by the Commission.

- The Commission supports UNL's continued efforts to help address the state's many public service needs through leadership, human resources, cultural enhancement, and examples of volunteerism.

Geographic Service Area

- UNL's geographic service area for off-campus instruction and public service programs related to agriculture, engineering and other fields where UNL offers unique public postsecondary programs shall be the entire state. This shall include the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

- UNL's geographic service area for off-campus instruction and public service in other fields includes the counties of: Richardson, Nemaha, Pawnee, Johnson, Gage, Jefferson, Thayer, Fillmore, Saline, Lancaster, Otoe, Cass, Seward, Butler, Saunders, Colfax, Dodge, Washington, Burt, Cuming, Stanton, Platte, Boone, Madison, Thurston, Dakota, Dixon, Wayne, Cedar, Pierce, Knox, Antelope, Holt, Wheeler, Garfield, Keya Paha, Garfield, Wheeler, Rock, Brown, Loup, Cherry, Hooker, Thomas, Logan, McPherson, Arthur, Grant, Sheridan, Deuel, Garden, Cheyenne, Kimball, Scottsbluff, Banner, Sioux, Dawes, Box Butte, Morrill, Boyd, Blaine.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Peers

A peer institution is one which is representative of the institution to which it is compared. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln's list of peer institutions is as follows:

Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama
Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado
Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa
Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas
Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma
Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana
University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado
University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia
University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas
University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri
University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee

Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture (NCTA)

The Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture (NCTA) at Curtis is a two-year, Associate of Applied Science degree-granting institution that offers technical agriculture-related programs. This institution is operated by the University, through the UNL Institute of Agriculture and National Resources (IANR).

- NCTA shall remain under the administration and management of the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska. The Commission has recommended that NCTA be recognized as fully integrated in the academic programs at the IANR at UNL.

- The Commission recommends that the Nebraska Legislature continue to fund NCTA at appropriate levels through a separate line item appropriation.

University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO)

The University of Nebraska at Omaha is a metropolitan campus serving the educational needs of the Omaha metropolitan area. It is classified as a Carnegie Master's (Comprehensive) College/University I. Tremendous potential exists for growth on this campus because it is located in the state's largest population base. This is reinforced by UNO's tradition of serving older, part-time students who comprise the fastest growing segment of postsecondary education as well as traditional college-age students.

"Informed choices will allow students in Nebraska to identify institutions that best serve their individual needs."

- UNO's programmatic service area, based on statute, is to serve as the primary unit within the University of Nebraska for urban-oriented programs.

- UNO has statewide responsibility for graduate-level programs in Criminal Justice, Social Work, Gerontology and Public Administration.

- UNO shall offer degree programs from baccalaureate through the masters and specialist in disciplines where it has a demonstrated capacity, including appropriate fiscal, human and physical resources to meet needs, and appropriate approval from the Coordinating Commission.

- With approval of the Board of Regents, the University of Nebraska at Omaha may offer doctoral programs upon demonstration of compelling need for disciplines in which UNO has a demonstrated capacity, including appropriate fiscal, human and physical resources, and as authorized and approved by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education.

- The Commission has stated that developmental education for under-prepared students is most appropriately provided by community colleges. Ideally, those who seek enrollment at UNO and are under-prepared or are enrolled and need developmental courses would be directed into courses offered through a community college.

Research

UNO's faculty has produced much valuable research and scholarship, as is appropriate for faculty at a senior institution where research is integral to graduate-level programs.

UNO serves as a source of urban, economic and business-related research that will serve its geographic and programmatic service areas and support its instructional programs.

- UNO's research mission must not over-shadow UNO's primary role of instruction. The Commission proposes that when possible, research ideally would support and enhance teaching and benefit students.

- The Commission encourages UNO to engage in collaborative research with business, government, organizations and other institutions on issues of significance to the metropolitan area and in those fields in which UNO has statewide responsibilities.

Public Service

As the only public, four-year university located in the state's largest urban area, UNO has a special responsibility to use its resources and expertise to provide leadership in solving problems of the metropolitan area and supporting its social, cultural, international and economic environment.

- The Commission encourages UNO, as an urban institution, to work closely with the Omaha metropolitan area to meet urban needs and provide leadership to build partnerships with appropriate constituencies.

- Public service activities which support and are related to UNO's instructional and research activity are favored by the Commission.

- Given the strong business base in the Omaha metropolitan area, UNO is encouraged to maintain its linkages with businesses, providing public service appropriate to its areas of expertise and within its resources. In this capacity, UNO serves as the lead institution for the Nebraska Business Development Center.

Geographic Service Area

- UNO's geographic service area is Douglas and Sarpy counties.

- For off-campus instruction and public service in urban-related programs, UNO's geographic service area shall be the entire state.

- For University of Nebraska institutions, UNO has statewide responsibility for graduate-level programs in Criminal Justice, Social Work, Gerontology and Public Administration.

University of Nebraska at Omaha Peers

A peer institution is one which is representative of the institution to which it is compared. The list of University of Nebraska at Omaha peer institutions is as follows:

Cleveland State University, Cleveland, Ohio
Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, Michigan
Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee
Portland State University, Portland, Oregon
University of Arkansas-Little Rock, Little Rock, Arkansas
University of Missouri-St. Louis, St. Louis, Missouri
University of Northern Iowa-Cedar Falls, Waterloo, Iowa
Wichita State University, Wichita, Kansas
Youngstown State University, Youngstown, Ohio

University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK)

The University of Nebraska at Kearney is a comprehensive regional institution, classified as a Carnegie Master's (Comprehensive) College/ University I. The Commission expects the University of Nebraska at Kearney will continue in its historic role of providing comprehensive, accessible postsecondary education to its region. Its off-campus programming, in particular, provides an important educational service to place-bound students in its geographic service area.

- The Commission expects the University of Nebraska at Kearney will continue to serve its region as a part of the University system, providing comprehensive, accessible postsecondary education.

Instruction

- UNK's primary emphasis shall be undergraduate programs leading to baccalaureate degrees in arts and sciences, business, teacher education and allied health.

- UNK needs to continue to identify disciplines for which needs exist, particularly within its geographic region.

- The Commission sees teacher education as one of UNK's key discipline areas.

- Currently, UNK offers masters degrees in Education and in Business Administration and specialist degrees in educational administration, school counseling, and school psychology. The Commission believes new masters degree programs at UNK would be developed only when a definite need exists and when UNK has demonstrated the capacity, including fiscal, human and physical resources, to meet that need.

- At this time, the Commission does not foresee the need for UNK to offer doctoral programs.

Research

As a result of its heritage as a State College, research has not been a major emphasis at UNK, nor does the Commission believe that emphasis should change significantly.

- The Commission does not foresee immediate need for an increased emphasis on research at UNK as a result of its inclusion in the University system.

- The Commission prefers that the preponderance of research conducted at UNK be directly related to enhancement of the instructional programs and/or the professional development of the faculty.

Public Service

The University of Nebraska at Kearney has a long tradition of service to its extensive geographic area. The Commission envisions that involvement in the region's economic development and cultural climate will continue to be an integral part of UNK's mission and supportive of its primary instructional role, to the extent resources permit.

- UNK needs to continue to help address its geographic service area's many public service needs by providing leadership, human resources, cultural activities, and enhancing volunteerism.

- The Commission anticipates UNK's continued cooperation with regional leaders to advance the economic development of its geographic service area.

- UNK is encouraged to continue to provide continuing education services to its region within its resources.

Geographic Service Area

- UNK's primary geographic service area is the south central region of the state, including the counties of Lincoln, Custer, Dawson, Frontier, Red Willow, Furnas, Gosper, Phelps, Harlan, Kearney, Franklin, Adams, Webster, Nuckolls, Clay, Hamilton, Hall, Buffalo, Valley, Sherman, Greeley, Howard, Merrick, Nance, Boone, Colfax, Platte, Polk, Keith, Perkins, Chase, Dundy, Hays, York and Hitchcock.

University of Nebraska at Kearney Peers

A peer institution is one which is representative of the institution to which it is compared. The list of University of Nebraska at Kearney peer institutions is as follows:

Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania, Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania
Central Missouri State University, Warrensburg, Missouri
Moorhead State University, Moorhead, Minnesota
Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas
Southeast Missouri State University, Cape Girardeau, Missouri
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, La Crosse, Wisconsin
University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, Whitewater, Wisconsin
Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, North Carolina
Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois

University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC)

UNMC is the primary unit of the University of Nebraska for programs in health-related disciplines. This includes a responsibility for educating dentists, nurses, pharmacists, physicians and allied health professionals. UNMC is classified by Carnegie as a Specialized Medical School.

Instruction

- Within its mission of meeting Nebraska's health-care needs, it is important that UNMC anticipate and prepare for the changing health-related needs of our citizens as they enter the twenty-first century.

- As the primary unit of the University of Nebraska for programs in health-related disciplines, UNMC shall continue to provide the state's education in health care disciplines and professions.

- The Commission encourages continued collaboration between UNMC and Creighton University and other institutions and hospitals, to consolidate programs, services, equipment usage and activities when appropriate. Nebraska cannot afford to support public educational options in these very expensive educational disciplines if private options or cooperative options will provide continued access at lesser public cost.

- The continuation of UNMC's high standards for admission will assure students are prepared for success at this level of education.

- UNMC's specialization and the concurrent impact on service and prestige serve as an excellent model to other institutions. By identifying and prioritizing specific areas for emphasis, it has earned wide-spread recognition and has attracted students from throughout the nation.

Research

Medical research is vital to the role and mission of the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Its research has brought it national recognition and has benefitted medical advancement. It has also provided a valuable health service to people of Nebraska and surrounding states.

- UNMC is encouraged to continue its excellence in research and in health-related services, but must be cognizant that there is a need to prioritize research due to limited state resources.

Public Service

UNMC provides many health-related public services to the state, including public health education, consultation and direct patient services. It serves the state, and in some specialized areas the nation, as a health referral center. It also has a leading role in health-related continuing education throughout the state.

- Among UNMC's health-related public service roles is the enhancement and support of rural health care and support of health care in rural and other under-served areas. As the need for rural health care increases, UNMC may need to devise further strategies to improve access and maintain quality within its resources.

- The Commission charges UNMC with the responsibility to study and develop strategies to mitigate the escalating economic impact of health care.

Geographic Service Area

- UNMC is the public institution with statewide responsibilities in the areas of baccalaureate and graduate-level health care education.

University of Nebraska Medical Center Peers

A peer institution is one which is representative of the institution to which it is compared. The list of University of Nebraska Medical Center peer institutions is as follows:

Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio
Oregon Health Science University, Portland, Oregon
University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona
University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio
University of Colorado Health Science Center, Denver, Colorado
University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida
University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa
University of Kansas Medical Center, Kansas City, Kansas
University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky
University of Oklahoma Health Science Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
University of Tennessee-Memphis, Memphis, Tennessee
University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah

Independent Colleges/Universities Role and Mission

Nebraska is fortunate to have many fine independent colleges and universities within its borders (see complete listing in Appendix I).

Independent institutions are predominantly liberal arts institutions, with distinct characteristics that in some cases attract a national and international student body. Some independent institutions have created a diverse, multi-cultural student body and have continued to adopt strategies to enhance cultural sensitivity among their students. Some offer a strong religious affiliation, others offer specialization in certain disciplines. Some independent colleges and universities include a focus on specific populations; for instance, targeting the older, returning college student.

Certainly from a strictly financial viewpoint, the state saves money every time a Nebraska student attends an independent college or university since they are largely supported by private funds and tuition and fees. It would be far more costly for Nebraska public funding if all Nebraska students attending these independent colleges and universities attended public institutions instead.

There are many benefits beyond savings to taxpayers, however. Independent colleges and universities also offer students increased educational options within the state, and in many instances, a different institutional climate from many public sector institutions. The Commission also recognizes the independent colleges and universities for the innovative, entrepreneurial approach they have taken to the delivery of and support of postsecondary education.

- For more effective statewide coordination, the Commission must consider the entire complement of postsecondary education in the state, including the public postsecondary institutions and the independent institutions.

Although public and private institutions collaborate and cooperate in many educational ventures, it is understandable that they also view each other as rivals in areas such as student recruitment and resource development. The Commission believes that the positive environment created by the presence of both public and private institutions within our state is beneficial to the overall quality of postsecondary education.

- Nebraska will realize the best use of its resources if there is communication, cooperation and collaboration among public and independent colleges and universities.

- The Commission supports a healthy combination of both public and private institutions, which both broaden educational choices for Nebraska residents and bring strength to a coordinated system of postsecondary education. The Commission will take the initiative to invite the independent colleges and universities and the private career schools to participate in statewide educational planning processes.

- The Commission will encourage educators and legislators to consider proposals that create formal partnerships between the public postsecondary institutions and the independent colleges and universities that will serve the best interests of the state.

Nebraska also must recognize that the world is changing and with it the delivery of education. Increasingly, we will see postsecondary education institutions from outside Nebraska providing educational opportunities via telecommunications within the borders of our state. Such programming may have both positive and negative repercussions within the state. This programming broadens educational options yet potentially encroaches upon the critical mass of students necessary to retain viable public and private institutions in Nebraska.

- The Commission must recognize and include out-of-state educational opportunities in the planning of a coordinated system of postsecondary education that meets students' needs and serves the long-term interests of the state.

- Consideration of educational compacts within the state are as valid as outside the state. A consortium within the state would enhance transferability of students and sharing of programs among public and private institutions comparable to what Nebraska already is committed to recognize with institutions out-of-state.

Private Career Schools
Role and Mission

The state's postsecondary education options are further enhanced by the presence of literally dozens of private career schools. In most instances, these schools provide short-term, career-oriented training programs in disciplines such as business, cosmetology, allied-health, trade and/or technical fields, and modeling. Entities that license and regulate the postsecondary education courses offered through these schools include the State Department of Education, the Board of Barber Examiners, the Department of Health, the Department of Motor Vehicles, and the Real Estate Commission.

Just as independent colleges and universities save the state money when students attend them, so do the private career schools since they also are primarily supported by tuition and fees. It would be far more costly for Nebraska public funding if all Nebraska students attending these private career schools attended public institutions instead. Many private career schools offer similar instructional programs as community colleges. Therefore, the existence of private career schools has substantial impact on the need for additional local taxation.

There are many benefits beyond savings to taxpayers, however. Private career schools provide an important option for students within our state. They offer additional access and differing instructional methodologies and scheduling.

- For more effective statewide coordination, the Commission must consider the entire complement of postsecondary education in the state, including the private career schools.

- Nebraska will realize the best use of its resources if there is communication, cooperation and collaboration among all sectors and institutions, including the private career schools.

- The Commission supports a healthy combination of both public and private institutions, which both broaden educational choices for Nebraska residents and bring strength to a coordinated system of postsecondary education. The Commission will take the initiative to invite the private career schools to participate in statewide educational planning processes.

Role of Elementary/Secondary Schools

The elementary and secondary education systems within our state and nation are expected to serve many critical functions for our society. Preparing students for college is but one of those functions, but it is the one on which we in postsecondary education most often focus. Before we place more demands upon the K/12 system, it is imperative that we are sensitive to the complexities of the role they are expected to play.

- Improved communication and understanding between K/12 and postsecondary education is essential, as it is a vital relationship for postsecondary education.

Postsecondary education relies on K/12 schools to adequately prepare students to continue their formal education.

- The Commission believes postsecondary education admission standards must be reflected in the design and outcomes of K/12 programs and services. Postsecondary education must articulate its standards and expectations so that K/12 can respond. Within this context, the Commission believes that what students understand and can do upon graduation from high school is of more importance than the number of courses they have taken.

- The Commission supports efforts of the State Department of Education to examine the nature, depth and breadth of all course work, including that required of pre-college students.

- K/12 schools have an important role in educating students to the value of racial and cultural diversity.

- Ideally, K/12 schools, in response to admission standards of post-secondary education, will fully provide the foundation for students to prepare themselves for college through proper course work, suitable counseling and appropriate graduation requirements. However, the responsibility to become adequately prepared for postsecondary education ultimately lies with the student.

- The Commission supports postsecondary education and K/12's participation in cooperative programs, such as Tech Prep and 2+2+2, which encourage and facilitate advancement into postsecondary education.

Counseling

Appropriate counseling of high school students is particularly important. If secondary students are to adequately prepare themselves for postsecondary education, they must understand the expectations of the different postsecondary educational institutions. We largely depend on high school counselors to help students understand and value the diversity and quality of postsecondary education opportunities in our state, including the public and private two- and four-year institutions and private career schools. To inadequately provide students with all of the information about postsecondary education; or to counsel them, based on misinformation, stereotyping or bias, toward one sector over the other, is a disservice to the students. There is no one best postsecondary institution for all students; institutions are as individual as the students they serve.

Secondary school pre-college counseling for minorities and other populations who are under-represented in postsecondary education is also crucial for the attainment of goals outlined in this Plan. Many of these students will become first-generation college students. They need to understand the value of postsecondary education and learn how the postsecondary education world functions. Good minds are wasted if students are not encouraged to venture beyond what may be limited expectations of family and friends in order to achieve new levels of success.

- Postsecondary education administrators are responsible for informing secondary school administrators, teachers and counselors of their expectations of entering students.

- The Commission encourages jointly sponsored events between K/12 and postsecondary education, such as College Fairs, which benefit students as they prepare for and make decisions about postsecondary education.

- The process of preparing students begins with proper programs and appropriate counseling in the K/12 system. Students need to be counseled to realize that, no matter what their long-term educational or career goals or where they plan to enroll, academic skills are essential for their success.

- High school counselors have an obligation to provide complete and fair information to students as these students undertake a most difficult selection process.

Personal and career counseling is very important for students in both the secondary level and elementary levels. It deserves high priority. Unfortunately, when school districts are faced with diminishing resources, often the opposite occurs and counseling is reduced or eliminated.

- The Commission asks local boards of education to place a higher priority on counseling for students at all levels. Such counseling will have a dramatic impact on a student's ability to make appropriate, informed educational, career and personal decisions.

- Leadership on the part of K/12 is necessary to ensure appropriate quality in the amount and kind of counseling received by elementary and secondary students. Leadership on the postsecondary level is also needed in regard to the preparation of those who will serve in this counseling role.

- The Commission urges elementary schools to more aggressively provide information about postsecondary education and career opportunities. Such information will help students develop a greater appreciation for the value of their education and help them make decisions at the junior high school or middle school level that will have a dramatic impact upon their success in high school and, ultimately, at the postsecondary educational level.

- Postsecondary educational institutions have an important role to assist the school systems in counseling in the secondary/elementary grades. Institutions can reach out to students in K/12 to expose them to postsecondary educational choices at an earlier age. Representatives of postsecondary educational institutions can meet with students and their parents at the elementary and secondary levels to communicate and inform them about the realities of college admission.

- Given the Commission's concern about counseling, it will facilitate periodic assistance through the state and in all levels of elementary, secondary and postsecondary education to enhance student and parent knowledge of postsecondary education. The Commission's continuing participation in the publication, "Careers and Education in Nebraska" is but one example of how the Commission can assist.

The Commission recognizes that counselors can only do so much to help prepare a student. Students have a significant responsibility to become

informed as well. Students must plan their postsecondary educational program with a realistic understanding of their interests and abilities. Students need to understand that their educational goals can be achieved step-by-step and that some institutions are more capable of meeting their needs at certain steps than others.

Teacher/Counselor Preparation

One of the most critical partnerships between K/12 and postsecondary education is teacher and counselor preparation. If generations to come are to benefit from improvements proposed today, in many respects it will be because postsecondary education addressed future teaching and counseling needs. Both teaching and counseling are vital, honorable professions that are an end to themselves, not merely stepping stones to an administrative position.

- It is more important than ever before that teacher education be forward looking and far less bound to continuing what was tried and true in past eras.

- Postsecondary education is advised to work closer with K/12 leadership at both the faculty and administrative levels to consider and communicate what constitutes high-quality teaching and counseling. The two entities can be partners in the on-going, professional development of our teachers and counselors.

- The Commission calls on counselor and teacher preparation programs at the postsecondary level to seriously reassess their content and methodology and to reach out more adequately to effect a major change in availability of counselors, methods of counseling and the priority of counseling in the school districts.

- Teacher preparation is not the sole responsibility of the Colleges of Education. Faculty in academic areas have a responsibility to future K/12 teachers within their disciplines.

- Those postsecondary educational institutions which prepare educational administrators are encouraged to teach their students the essential role that counseling plays. A greater appreciation for the difficulties of counseling and the importance of counseling would be established.

Many excellent joint efforts between K/12 and postsecondary education are already underway. One notable example responds to concerns about our students' math and science skills. The federal Eisenhower Program for the Improvement of Science and Mathematics Education, the higher education portion of which is being administered in Nebraska by the Coordinating Commission, provides innovative, statewide programs for professional development of our state's mathematics and science teachers. The Commission is proud to participate in this fine program. The synergy that can result from such interactive, statewide projects is encouraged. The Commission also applauds individual efforts by institutions to address this issue.

- The Commission seeks to coordinate its efforts with other entities that may share common educational interests, such as the Statewide Systemic Initiative.

Role of Employers

Employers are a driving factor in how postsecondary education structures and delivers educational programs. The qualifications employers seek in their employees in many respects dictate what postsecondary education must provide in many fields.

Employers seeking specific knowledge and abilities help formulate our curriculum and our expectations for outcomes. Employers' demands for employees who can think creatively, make responsible decisions, communicate clearly, represent themselves well within the community and provide a broad, international perspective set the stage for strong liberal arts and general education programs that develop the whole person.

- To serve its students well, postsecondary education needs to understand and address the needs of employers. This requires communication and cooperation between employers and educational leaders.

- An ongoing dialog between employers and postsecondary education is necessary if our students are to excel in their chosen careers; if our current and future businesses are to be competitive in an increasingly complex national and worldwide economy; and if our state is to emerge as one of national and international multi-industrial strength.

"To realize life-long learning, postsecondary education must extend beyond colleges and universities."

Many employers are more directly involved in education, providing tuition assistance, job sites for on-the-job training, cooperative education, apprenticeships and other educational opportunities in the work place. Many participate on advisory committees; contribute to institutional foundations or matching donation programs for their employees; act as adjunct faculty, present guest lectures, etc. Such displays of support for education by employers are appropriate. Employers are in the "people business," and postsecondary educational institutions are a source of the people that drive the engines of industry. They have a vital stake in how well postsecondary educational institutions perform.

- Ideally, employers would work with educators to address mutual issues such as training assessment, on-the-job training, financial aid programs that enhance access to education, changing technology, out-migration of students and employees, and the impact of internationalization on education and business.

Increasingly our businesses operate and compete on an international basis. If they are to be successful, it is important that they understand the economic, political and societal systems of other countries. Employees with international perspectives and the ability to effectively communicate in foreign languages will be in high demand. To meet this demand, businesses will turn to postsecondary education as a primary source of such employees.

If our state is to continue to thrive economically, it needs entrepreneurs who, by creating new businesses, invest not only in their own future, but in the future of Nebraska as well. Many more new businesses fail than succeed, however. Often, the cause of failure is people who are unprepared educationally to succeed as entrepreneurs.

- Postsecondary education institutions and employers need to work together to prepare students for success as employees or entrepreneurs in an increasingly internationalized business world.

There are situations in which employers become educators themselves, providing apprenticeship programs and other types of on-the-job training. They may believe that they have a better understanding of their needs and are better prepared to teach their specific training needs. They may be unaware of the potential or opportunity for customized, cooperative training programs between business and education, or believe, erroneously in many cases, that it is more cost efficient for them to provide the training themselves. Whatever their reasons, employers may become educational competitors.

Competition between employers and educators can be healthy, generating creative initiatives and spurring vitality on the part of both educators and employers. However, the need for such competition could be considerably lessened if business and postsecondary education understood each other better. Too often, there are not sufficient bridges between the worlds of business and education.

- Increased communication between the employers and postsecondary education will lead to cooperative and collaborative initiatives that benefit business, education and the citizens of the state.

Role of Higher Education Compacts and Out-of-State Institutions

As the Commission examines the issue of unnecessary duplication of programs and resources, it is imperative to look beyond the boundaries of our state. Important in this process is Nebraska's membership in the seven-state Midwestern Higher Education Commission Compact. Among the Compact's benefits to Nebraska's students and postsecondary educational institutions is a sharing of resources. Eventual implementation of the student exchange program will broaden educational options available to our students. The exchange will present an economical solution to the problem of program availability within each state by providing access to programs that the state cannot or does not want to offer.

- Our state boundaries must become more transparent as the Commission strives to conserve state resources and, at the same time, broaden our citizens' access to postsecondary education.

- The Commission's rules for review of proposed new instructional programs take into consideration the existence of higher education compacts. The Commission looks to the Midwestern Higher Education Commission Compact to resolve some of the state's programmatic considerations as well as contribute to the state in many ways.

Some students undoubtedly will leave the state as a result of the Compact. But this is a two-way street. In return, the Compact will draw out-of-state students to the many fine, specialized programs of Nebraska. An influx of out-of-state students will further enrich our institutions by bringing diversity, new cultures and different perspectives to the state.

Postsecondary educational institutions are a strong economic force in this state. Students from out-of-state will come not only to our institutions, but to the communities that house them. These students will contribute to the vitality of the institutions and will also contribute financial and human resources to support communities in which the institutions exist.

Why should students want to come to Nebraska? The strengths, exemplary programs and distinct personalities of our institutions must be the magnets that attract them. This is but one reason why the Commission sees institutional specialization as a vital force for institutional well-being.

It is essential that concurrent with exemplary education comes institutional, sector and statewide marketing of Nebraska's postsecondary education system. No matter how good our programs and our institutions become, students won't come to the state unless they are made more aware of what Nebraska's postsecondary education institutions offer.

- The Commission asks Nebraska's institutions to closely examine their own marketability and the messages they are sending to prospective students to develop strategies that will attract more out-of-state students to Nebraska institutions.

Unnecessary Duplication by Out-of-State Institutions

The Commission has responsibility to determine whether out-of-state institutions shall be permitted to offer classes in Nebraska.

- In forming this judgment, the Commission will consider the impact that such out-of-state institutions will have on creating unnecessary duplication in Nebraska.

While the Commission has no authority to make such determination for independent colleges and universities or private career schools in Nebraska, the Commission's responsibility to judge out-of-state institutions is an appropriate vehicle to facilitate effective use of in-state programs by both public and private institutions.

- The Commission encourages out-of-state institutions to cooperate and coordinate with in-state institutions. Such cooperation and coordination is desirable and would be less likely to contribute to unnecessary duplication.

- The Commission encourages out-of-state institutions that wish to fill instructional voids in Nebraska for which the resources of Nebraska are unavailable or of low priority.

- The Commission will consider the availability of instructional programs in Nebraska by existing public and private institutions of Nebraska when making a judgment about whether an out-of-state institution should be authorized to conduct programs in Nebraska.

Role and Mission
Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education

"The Commission can facilitate the cooperation among the sectors and institutions that is necessary to achieve goals."

Both the State Constitution and statutes very clearly state that the Coordinating Commission's role and mission is one of coordination, not governance. Governance must come from within each institution. Therefore, the Comprehensive Plan focuses on actions required to strengthen postsecondary education through increased coordination rather than on changes in postsecondary education's governance structure.

Within the Commission's responsibility to facilitate coordination, primary focus has been placed on the coordination of institutions. Yet, the Commission has another responsibility to facilitate the educational coordination of a most valuable human resource . . . students. Students are the focus of all of postsecondary education. It is appropriate that they are also the focus of the Commission. Coordinated postsecondary institutions, together with students who plan their own education based on their abilities, access, availability and the quality they seek, will inter-weave two crucial resources of our state.

- The Commission will function as a coordinating body with the intent to work as closely with each of the five sectors as possible.

- The Coordinating Commission must act as a student-centered, state-wide oriented entity that is responsive to the postsecondary educational needs and concerns of the people of Nebraska.

- The Commission can help provide postsecondary educational memory for the state. Through this role, the Commission can provide roots that don't shift continually with changes in our state's office holders or in the governance at institutions.

- The Commission will establish objective, coordinating outcomes to demonstrate postsecondary education's accountability to the citizens, taxpayers, students, institutions, Legislature and Governor.

- As an advocate for Nebraska postsecondary education, the Coordinating Commission will communicate to Nebraska citizens, and in particular to K/12 students, the many educational options that exist within the state's five postsecondary educational sectors.

- The Commission has the responsibility to coordinate educational programs such as the Eisenhower Program for the Improvement of Science and Mathematics Education and others that promote and enhance education within our state.

- The Commission has the responsibility to administer certain state financial aid programs.

- The Commission will offer leadership and support to Nebraska's public postsecondary educational institutions to assist them in adapting to and succeeding in the use of new technologies in the emerging "information age."

- To the extent possible, the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education will inform citizens about learning opportunities via distance learning and the standards such courses should meet and the support services they should provide.

- The Commission sees itself as a responsible partner in education, sharing common goals with all of the state's postsecondary educational sectors and institutions. A part of this responsibility is to avoid placing unnecessary burdens on the institutions. Instead, the Commission will strive to promote coordination, cooperation, and efficiency in our institutions that will help create an exemplary postsecondary educational system. The Commission's primary role is leadership in fostering cooperation and coordination which is dependent on good working relationships with public institutions as well as independent colleges and universities and private career schools.

- The Commission, as a constitutional agency, represents the citizens of Nebraska for the purposes of coordinating postsecondary educational institutions to bring about exemplary postsecondary education in the state; examining the priorities, quality and efficiency of Nebraska postsecondary education; evaluating strategies and statewide processes for effectiveness; and implementing efficient improvements. The Commission asks the governing boards of colleges and universities to establish parallel processes to work with the Commission on these most important initiatives.

- The Commission is dedicated to its own efficiency, accountability and performance at the highest level.

— The Commission will not evolve into a bureaucratic state that becomes a hindrance to effective cooperation and responsiveness among institutions. Instead, it is dedicated to using the same standards for itself that it asks of the institutions.

— The Commission will hold itself accountable to abide by its official code of ethics in performance of all of its responsibilities and functions.

Admission Standards of Postsecondary Education

All students at Nebraska's higher education institutions ideally should be ready to learn at the postsecondary level. This goal stems from the realization that human, fiscal and time resources are too often wasted when under-prepared students seek unreasonable educational goals without a willingness to acquire knowledge and skills required for achievement. Postsecondary educational institutions do the student, the faculty, the institution, or the state no favor by perpetuating a revolving door. It is costly. It can create or confirm a mentality of failure. It is unnecessary in a coordinated system of postsecondary education which begins with an understanding of the abilities of entering students.

- The Commission believes that the well-being of students must come first in consideration of admission standards at each institution. Clearly defined admission standards will enable students to enroll at institutions where they have the best opportunity for performance growth which can lead to long-term success.

Although allowances must be made for non-traditional age students returning to school, ideally all "traditional-age" students coming directly from the K/12 system would be prepared to learn at the postsecondary level. There is a quickly eroding distinction between the college-track and career-track in high schools. Prospective hands-on and service-oriented career students must be counseled that academic courses are required to succeed at all college levels, including community colleges and private career schools. Virtually all careers demand excellent mathematics, reading, and communication skills. Virtually all employment demands the ability to retrain, learn and think. Strong academic preparation combined with job-specific training will enable a person to successfully meet such challenges.

Students also cannot afford to view sciences and humanities as unwarranted subjects in their education. Today's employees must see the "bigger picture" and provide insight and understanding to enable their employer, or their own business, to succeed within that framework.

- Knowledge of communications, mathematics, science, geography, political sciences and languages are among those disciplines which are vital to students in today's complex, global society.

- Our students need to understand other cultures, economies, political systems and languages if our country is to maintain its role as an economic and political leader in the world community.

If we are to demand measurable outcomes for students as they leave our institutions, it is appropriate that we expect certain levels of ability as they enter. Just as the institutions identify definite requirements and qualifications when hiring their employees, so should they set meaningful standards in their student admission process. Institutions would not hire an unqualified employee knowing of the high probability that the individual would be unsuccessful on the job. Yet, they will accept an unqualified student into their institution and assume that somehow he or she will find a way to succeed. This is counter-productive to both students and institutions. If our institutions are to become exemplary, they must have students who contribute to the learning environment.

"Appropriate and varying admission standards for each sector and institution will increase student success as measured by higher student retention and graduate placement rates."

- The process of preparing students begins with proper programs and appropriate counseling in the K/12 system.

- The Commission urges educational institutions to identify appropriate admission standards reflective of their missions and to communicate these standards to the K/12 school systems.

- Postsecondary education has a responsibility to assist in improving the preparation of prospective students. It is each institution's responsibility to inform students, parents and K/12 schools of its admission standards and expectations for adequate academic preparation. Adults who are considering returning to postsecondary education must also be informed of how admission standards impact them.

- For the best interests of both the institutions and their students, admission standards at Nebraska's postsecondary educational institutions should be comparable to those of their respective peers.

- If admission standards are raised, credit transfer between community colleges and four-year institutions is as important as cooperative relationships between K/12 and four-year institutions, as both will be impacted by the new standards.

Community colleges can be the equalizing agent to adequate preparation. Their open admissions policies provide anyone over the age of sixteen who is

not enrolled in the K/12 school system with access to postsecondary education. Students can come to the community college and take developmental courses that prepare them for college-level courses. Upon successful completion of developmental course work, students can choose from a wide array of career-oriented programs offered at community colleges, complete community college academic courses that transfer to a four-year college or university, or, if they qualify, enroll immediately at a four-year college or university.

Community College Admissions Guidelines

- The Commission foresees community colleges continuing their policy of open admissions, although not necessarily to all programs within the institution.

- Community colleges need to examine individual programs and determine criteria that can measure entry-level standards. Different standards that reflect the differences in programs are acceptable. Faculty most likely will take the lead in identifying ability levels required for probable success within each discipline.

- Postsecondary education needs to provide access to developmental course work for those who are unprepared to succeed at the college level. In most cases, community colleges are the appropriate source of these developmental courses.

State College Admissions Guidelines

- State Colleges need to expect students to be prepared to succeed at the college level upon admission. It is incumbent on the faculty to identify skills and competencies that a student must have to enroll in their courses. These skills and competencies need to be communicated to K/12 counselors and students by the institutions.

- Ideally, all State College course work would be at the true college-level, with developmental education needs of students provided whenever possible through cooperative arrangements with community colleges.

- The Commission supports a reasonable transition period to raise admission standards at the State Colleges.

— This period will allow time for the K/12 schools to adjust curriculum and to allow students the opportunity to meet these new standards.

— The Commission holds diversity as a preeminent objective. Consequently, a transition period will also provide time for the institutions to fund and implement programs to assure that new admission standards do not interfere with the achievement of diversity goals.

University of Nebraska Admissions Guidelines

- The University expects students to be prepared to succeed at the college level upon admission. It is incumbent on the faculty to identify skills and competencies that a student must have to enroll in their courses.

- The Commission supports a reasonable transition period to raise admission standards at the University.

  — This period will allow time for the K/12 schools to adjust curriculum and to allow students the opportunity to meet these new standards.

  — The Commission holds diversity as a preeminent objective. Consequently, a transition period will also provide time for the institutions to fund and implement programs to assure that new admission standards do not interfere with the achievement of diversity goals.

Chapter Four
Provide Access

Access to postsecondary education is vitally important to the people of Nebraska. Our citizens hold highly the belief that postsecondary education opportunity should be readily available to them. There is, however, a balance between perceived need for access and the state's ability to provide that access. Citizens must realize that the state cannot afford to provide everything for everyone.

For the most part, Nebraskans enjoy reasonable access to postsecondary education. Nebraskans attend college at a higher rate than the national average, and most choose to remain in Nebraska for their education. A variety of public and private institutions provide Nebraskans with many educational choices. These institutions have already undertaken many initiatives on their own to facilitate access. Yet, access issues remain within the state that must be addressed.

The Commission wishes to facilitate reasonable access to postsecondary education to all who are ready, and to assist educational development of all Nebraska citizens to the limits of their capacities, free of artificial or unnecessary constraints.

- The issues of access must focus on priorities and accommodation as they relate to discrimination, ability level, convenience and cost.

- Nebraska has an obligation to all of its people to provide support resources, educational opportunities, and a sense of an achievable future. If the vision of "One Nebraska" as a vision shared by all Nebraska is to be achieved, it must result from an effort by all Nebraska citizens working together to improve the well-being of each other.

Discrimination

As a result of the changing demographics within our state, an increasing awareness by citizens of the value of education, and the recruitment efforts of our institutions, more African-Americans, Asians, Hispanics, Native Americans and other minority populations are entering Nebraska's postsecondary institutions. At the same time, increasing numbers of older or "nontraditional-age" students are entering postsecondary education. More disabled students are also enrolling in postsecondary education as our

institutions become more responsive to their needs. We cherish these changes and commend the institutions for their efforts.

"All Nebraskans deserve reasonable access to higher education."

- Access to postsecondary education must be available to all people irrespective of age, culture, disability, gender or race.

- Beyond providing access, the Commission believes it is essential that institutions assure that all students, particularly minorities and other under-represented groups, are welcomed and integrated into campus life and have opportunities to succeed.

The past achievement levels of many of these new student populations, minorities in particular, demonstrate a need for changes within our institutions. These include adding or enhancing specialized counseling services, appropriate support services and a nurturing atmosphere that encourages students to succeed. These improvements will benefit all students, but especially the new populations of students, many of whom, as first-generation college students, are unprepared for the campus environment.

The Nebraska 1990 census shows that members of minority populations are now residing in every county of the state. While Nebraska's demographics may be changing less rapidly than other areas of the country, we are nevertheless reflecting the national trend of increasing numbers of minorities.

- Postsecondary educational institutions are urged to seize the opportunity to serve new student populations and, at the same time, diversify their own campuses to provide a broader educational experience for all students.

Over the long term, it will be the state of Nebraska that will be a major benefactor of these initiatives as increasing numbers of minorities, women, disabled individuals and older-aged citizens have the education and training to contribute to the economic and social well-being of the state.

- Although Nebraska ranks high nationally in the share of its population with some college education, many in our population, particularly minority citizens, remain under-represented in the state's postsecondary educational institutions.

— Institutions need to continue efforts toward recruiting and retaining a diverse student body, reflecting racial and cultural diversity.

— The Commission urges four-year institutions to implement programs and allocate resources toward the goal of increasing the baccalaureate degree completion rate for minorities.

— In Nebraska, as throughout the country, community colleges, particularly those located in urban centers, have enrolled a higher percentage of minority students than the four-year colleges and universities. As admission standards change at the University, minority enrollment could increase at the community colleges. However, as the community colleges' role as feeder institutions into the State College and University systems increases, the Commission believes that both the State Colleges and the University will accept increasing numbers of minority transfer students wishing to complete their education. And, in so doing, these students will increasingly achieve their aspirations.

- The Commission strongly supports affirmative action that promotes equality and diversity at all of Nebraska's postsecondary educational institutions. The Commission calls on the leadership in Nebraska institutions to take bold initiatives to eliminate discrimination, support equity, and promote diversity within their student bodies, faculty and staff. Recommended efforts to support this goal include:

  — The Commission favors virtually universal access at community colleges which will provide educational opportunities ranging from developmental course work to technical and academic transfer programs.

  — Institutional leaders can assure that their campuses are accessible, that recruitment plans target minorities and other under-represented students, that these plans are achieved, and that adequate support services are in place to help students adjust to a college environment.

  — Institutions can actively recruit faculty and student role models for the new student populations so that as many students as possible see persons like themselves in a variety of responsible, admirable positions. The Commission especially encourages institutions to provide role models for women and minorities in fields in which

they are often under-represented, such as mathematics, science, engineering, as well as at the highest levels of administration.

— Those institutions located in rural areas where it is more difficult to recruit sufficient numbers of minority faculty, staff and students can enhance awareness of differing races and cultures through activities such as guest lecturers, exchange programs, trips to other locales, cultural events, etc. Such efforts should in no way, however, lessen these institutions' resolve to recruit minorities as students, faculty, staff and administrators on their campuses.

— The Commission supports special activities such as mentoring programs and peer counseling that help first-generation college students and students from under-represented populations adjust to the campus environment.

— All institutions can promote an awareness of cultural and racial diversity through their curriculum and student campus activities. Classes that increase awareness of racial and cultural diversity can be required within each institution's general education core.

- The Commission recognizes that programs and services needed to meet these objectives will require financial resources. The Commission will advocate allocation of state funds for achievement of these objectives.

Ability and Articulation

Students do not have equal abilities, interests and motivation. They certainly do not come to postsecondary education with equivalent preparation. An appropriate goal of postsecondary education is to provide access to postsecondary education consistent with each person's abilities at any given point in his or her growth.

- All individuals deserve access to postsecondary education that is appropriate to their preparation and their goals.

- Clearly defined roles and missions and differing admission standards will help students identify the institutions that will best serve their needs.

- Postsecondary educational institutions can facilitate opportunities for individuals to move easily from one sector of postsecondary education to

another as their abilities grow and their needs, interests and educational goals shift.

- A student's options for postsecondary education should not be limited by his or her choice of where first to attend college. Provided the institution is properly accredited, achievements from the first institution will open doors to new opportunities at other institutions.

These articulation guidelines recognize the traditional role of faculty in determining course comparability between institutions, and underscores the need for faculty to adjust to changes and to make fair and reasonable decisions when appropriate standards are attained. To truly meet student needs, articulation between institutions must become far more prevalent within Nebraska postsecondary education.

The Commission endorses the following transfer of credit guidelines:

- Academic credits for equivalent courses at one public institution would be appropriately recognized by the others, creating a seamless, coordinated public postsecondary educational system. This guideline would apply to students transferring from one sector to the other, such as from a community college to a State College; as well as from one institution to another within the same sector, such as from UNO to UNL or from CCC/Hastings Campus to CCC/Platte Campus.

  - Coordination among public postsecondary institutions would mean that credit earned with a satisfactory grade in an equivalent course at one regionally accredited public college or university would be accepted as credit at another regionally accredited public college or university.

  - Associate and baccalaureate degree-granting institutions would be equal partners in providing the first two years of baccalaureate degree programs. The two-year Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees would ensure that its holders have met the lower division general education requirements in all public postsecondary schools in Nebraska. Likewise, students who have satisfactorily completed all of the lower division general education requirements at a State College would be admitted to a University institution, without requiring additional lower division general education courses.

— No student who has earned an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree in an accredited community college or completed the required courses for the first two years at an accredited State College, and has achieved satisfactory grades in courses equivalent to those at the University, would be required to repeat any course.

— Students who began but did not complete the Associate of Arts or Associate in Science degree at an accredited institution would be granted credit for satisfactorily completed courses that the accepting baccalaureate institution determines are equivalent to its own courses. State College students transferring to a University institution would also be granted credit for satisfactorily completed, equivalent courses; as would University students be granted credit for satisfactorily completed, equivalent courses when they transfer to State Colleges and community colleges.

- Each institution is ultimately responsible for the quality of its educational programs. The Commission urges associate and baccalaureate degree-granting institutions to work together to assure that lower-division baccalaureate programs throughout the state are equivalent in scope and quality. The Commission, in cooperation with the sectors and institutions, will facilitate articulation agreements and transfer policies that create "portable" education credits.

- Ideally, colleges and universities would assure that transfer students have the same opportunities as non-transfer students to become integrated into the campus social, cultural and academic activities.

- The Commission will take the initiative to prepare a status report on articulation in the state between institutions. The Commission may make further recommendations regarding articulation based on the results of this report.

Convenience

As our student populations become more diverse, meeting student needs means rethinking where, when and how education occurs. Increasingly, the postsecondary student population is over 25 years old, attends part time, and must schedule classes around the locations and requirements of work and family. Class sites and times, library schedules, and office hours need to reflect the needs of these students.

- The Commission prefers that institutions conform to students' needs rather than expect students to conform to theirs'.

"Nebraska can provide far more educational opportunities throughout the state through collaborative efforts using telecommunications and other emerging technologies."

Nebraska's expansive geographic area can make an individual's place of residence a true, but not totally insurmountable, access problem. The vast majority of the state's population lives within 55 miles of a two-year or four-year institution. Yet, access in the western and northern parts of the state remains a problem that is difficult to fully overcome.

The state cannot afford to build more public postsecondary institutions. Nor can communities expect that even substantial community support for educational endeavors in their area will be met with enthusiasm by institutions already strapped to meet on-campus needs. Institutions simply cannot afford to provide every curriculum in every location.

- Responsive and flexible off-campus instruction facilitates access to postsecondary education for place-bound students, which is its primary purpose. However, the Commission sees no need to permit off-campus education centers to become free-standing, degree-granting, public postsecondary institutions.

- The Commission recognizes that geographic access through off-campus programs may be at the expense of on-campus programs. Institutions need to identify priorities based on need and resources in establishing an appropriate balance between on- and off-campus programming.

Instructional Technologies

Postsecondary education can benefit from maximum use of new and emerging instructional technologies that create opportunities for expanded and innovative instruction, for increased course and resource sharing among institutions, and for more comprehensive distance learning options for citizens throughout the state.

These technologies include, but are not limited to, course work delivered via terrestrial or satellite-based telecommunications, which may be synchronized in time between students and teachers, such as a two-way interactive video classroom, or asynchronous, such as a student learning largely through computer-mediated or internet-based programs. Such course work may be offered by individual institutions or through a consortium of multiple institutions representing several states. In many cases, these technologies will be used as part of an otherwise traditional course of program of study. In

general, course work offered via these new technologies is student-centered, self-paced and flexible as to time and place.

Geographic boundaries and remote locations present few obstacles for most of the new instructional technologies. Instead, these technologies allow Nebraskans to choose from a broad array of educational options offered through various technologies by institutions and other entities both from with or outside of our state.

- The Commission proposes that the state and its postsecondary education institutions commit to the use of instructional technologies that will broaden access to postsecondary education and support a "seamless" education system throughout the state.

  — Expanded, coordinated and well-planned use of instructional technologies throughout the state will:

    - Serve as a good investment of Nebraska's resources by providing a reasonably efficient method of broadening and enhancing access to postsecondary educational opportunities.

    - Provide opportunities for innovative and coordinated educational projects among the K/12 system, postsecondary education, and the communities they serve.

    - Allow institutions to tailor courses and programs to meet the needs of specific groups of people, regardless of their location.

    - Assist postsecondary educational institutions to serve businesses through increased access to, and sharing of, educational and business-related expertise.

    - Offer institutions the opportunity to share high quality programs and outstanding teachers. Such exchanges will broaden and enrich the educational experience of students at more institutions and provide greater efficiency in use of the state's resources.

New challenges accompany the profound changes and benefits that technology brings to education. One such challenge is quality assurance. Technology that allows institutions and businesses throughout the country and world to offer academic programs over long distance into individual

homes and work places will be difficult to measure in terms of the quality of the programming and services that are being provided.

"Education that is progressive and satisfying begins by identifying and addressing current and future needs of the citizens of the state."

- It is important that all distance learning programs available in Nebraska result in learning outcomes appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the degree/certificate awarded.

- The Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education and representatives of Nebraska's postsecondary education institutions are encouraged to work together to inform citizens of the expectations and standards for educational programs delivered through instructional technologies and, to the extent possible, to assure the quality of those educational programs and support services made available at distance to students residing throughout the state.

- The Commission endorses the North Central Association's Guidelines for Distance Learning. Courses offered in Nebraska via instructional technologies are expected to meet or exceed the following standards:

  Curriculum and Instruction

  — Programs provide for timely and appropriate interaction between students and faculty, and among students.

  — The institution's faculty assumes responsibility for and exercises oversight of distance education, ensuring both the rigor of programs and the quality of instruction.

  — The institution ensures that the technology used is appropriate to the nature and objectives of the program.

  — The institution ensures the currency of materials, programs, and courses.

  — The institution's distance education policies are clear concerning the ownership of materials, faculty compensation, copyright issues, and the utilization of revenue derived from the creation and production of software, telecourses, or other media products.

  — The institution provides appropriate faculty support specifically related to distance education.

— The institution provides appropriate training for faculty who teach in distance education programs.

Evaluation and Assessment

— The institution assesses student capability to succeed in distance education programs and applies this information to admission and recruiting policies and decisions.

— The institution evaluates the educational effectiveness of its distance education programs (including assessments of student learning outcomes, student retention, and student satisfaction) to ensure comparability to campus-based programs.

— The institution ensures the integrity of student work and the credibility of the degrees and credits it awards.

Library and Learning Resources

— The institution ensures that students have access to and can effectively use appropriate library resources.

— The institution monitors whether students make appropriate use of learning resources.

— The institution provides laboratories, facilities, and equipment appropriate to the courses or programs.

Student Services

— The institution provides adequate access to the range of student services appropriate to support the programs, including admissions, financial aid, academic advising, delivery of course materials, and placement and counseling.

— The institution provides an adequate means for resolving student complaints.

— The institution provides to students advertising, recruiting, and admissions information that adequately and accurately represents the programs, requirements, and services available.

— The institution ensures that students admitted possess the knowledge and equipment necessary to use the technology

employed in the program, and provides technical assistance to students who are experiencing difficulty using the required technology.

Facilities and Finances

— The institution possesses the equipment and technical expertise required for distance education.

— The institution's long-range planning, budgeting, and policy development processes reflect the facilities, staffing, equipment and other resources essential to the viability and effectiveness of the distance education program.

- The Commission will utilize the North Central Association's Guidelines for Distance Learning in fulfilling its Constitutional and statutory duties, including review of new programs and review of applications for out-of-state programs and new private colleges.

Multi-state consortia provide yet another opportunity to broaden educational opportunities for Nebraskans through student exchange programs.

- The Commission and governing boards of postsecondary education institutions must make judgments regarding new programs and facilities based, in part, on knowledge of alternative opportunities for reasonable access. Reasonable access may mean access to a specific program that is available at another institution, in another sector, or in another state through the Midwestern Higher Education Commission Compact.

Cost of Education

Postsecondary education must also be financially accessible to Nebraskans. Many Nebraskans identify cost as the major barrier to postsecondary education. Yet, the state's financial resources are limited. As costs to institutions increase without a concurrent increase in state support, increased responsibility is placed on the students and their families to provide necessary resources through tuition and fees.

In comparison to some other states and certainly in comparison to private institutions, Nebraska public postsecondary education tuition and fees represent a true bargain. While the public may feel cost is a major barrier, and for many of the lowest income level that is true, cost in many circumstances is more a reconsideration of spending priorities. For the price

of a new automobile, a student can gain a lifetime of benefit. While one might think high quality, life-time benefits should be available at little or no cost simply because tax dollars already support public postsecondary education, the Commission contends that is an unreasonable expectation. Even moderate tuition and fee increases will provide exceptional value considering the student is making an investment that will last a lifetime.

- It is the goal of the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education to:

  — Encourage Nebraska citizens to see postsecondary education as a valuable, life-time investment.

  — Advocate financial assistance to financially needy students to improve access and help resolve many related issues.

  — Encourage access for Nebraska students to the Nebraska higher educational institution of their choice, and for which they are academically prepared.

  — Encourage Nebraska residents to seek postsecondary education within the state.

Obviously, financial aid can make a significant difference in whether financially-needy students can participate in postsecondary education. The opportunity for postsecondary education is particularly vital to many of our state's financially needy who may otherwise see no way out of their financial situation and limited job options. The best financial aid strategies give needy students reasonable flexibility to select the most appropriate Nebraska postsecondary institution — public or private.

- Nebraska does not begin to provide adequate aid to the financially-needy students of the state. The students of Nebraska will be best served if the Coordinating Commission, postsecondary educational institutions, and state government leaders work together to assure that tuition policies, state funding and student financial aid programs are coordinated to assure that educational needs of Nebraska citizens, especially the financially needy, are met.

- The Commission sees money spent on financial aid for our state's financially needy as a means to provide positive options for individuals as

well as to save the state money in the long run. It is far cheaper to provide financial aid that empowers individuals to achieve higher aspirations than to continue to increase funds for social services and build more prisons to accommodate those who, due in part to a lack of education, are unable to succeed within the mainstream of our society.

Chapter Five
Meet Needs

Meeting needs within a continually evolving state, nation and world requires flexibility, responsiveness and a willingness to change. It also demands prioritizing goals, as it is not possible to meet everyone's needs with limited public resources. Effective post-secondary education establishes priorities for three constituencies: students, employers, and citizens of the state.

Many of the changes the Commission proposes involve adjustments in programs and services that are driven by at least three trends. First, all schools are serving a population that is becoming increasingly diverse in age, race, and culture. Second, new technologies demand a population with stronger mathematics and science skills and stronger general education for learning how to use technology wisely. Third, with the end of the Cold War, the world may be more stable, but it is also more challenging with the emergence of a highly competitive global economy in a world of diverse cultures and needs.

All Nebraska postsecondary institutions exist to meet educational needs. The Commission believes this has led to efforts by some institutions to provide something for everyone.

- The Commission believes that as institutions evaluate existing instructional programs and propose new programs, it is imperative that they do so within the framework of priorities focused on the reality of limited resources.

- Institutions are advised to ensure that their instructional programs are exemplary within their role and mission, meet their institutional objectives, and serve the needs of the students and the state within available resources.

In this assurance process, the institutions and/or their governing boards may not be able to adopt every otherwise meritorious proposal presented to them.

- It is in the state's best interest if governing boards base their decisions regarding proposals for new programs, services and facilities on statewide

needs, measurable outcomes and availability of resources. Although parochial interests are one measure of demand, they do not necessarily represent what is in the best interest of the institution and the state.

- The Commission applauds those governing boards who act responsibly as a caretaker of the public good.

Meeting Students' Needs

Students are the center of instructional planning. Access to and opportunity for success at all levels of postsecondary education are central to a postsecondary education system that meets needs. As more minority students and more non-traditional age students enter our institutions, institutions that truly meet needs adjust and relate to the changing student population's needs.

- Institutions are advised to broaden and improve their counseling, advising and support services to serve students more effectively, particularly the new population of students, many of whom are first-generation college students.

- The Commission supports peer tutoring and counseling programs as a means to provide one-on-one assistance for students. Tutoring can benefit all students at various points of their college careers.

- Governing boards are encouraged to maintain an institutional focus that will enhance openness and support for older, minority, disabled and other traditionally, under-represented populations.

- The Commission believes that students enrolled in our institutions must have the opportunity to take courses that properly prepare them for careers in their chosen fields as well as enable them to become constructive participants in our democratic society.

- The Commission urges colleges and universities to provide general education courses that prepare students to contribute constructively to our nation's social, economic and governmental framework; and relevant, targeted course work that prepares graduates for successful careers.

- The Commission foresees students leaving Nebraska's colleges and universities with demonstrated competencies in challenging and relevant educational programs. Good mathematics and science skills are

particularly important if our students and our nation are to compete successfully in a global society.

- Institutions are also advised to provide learning support systems including accessible libraries and computer labs, modern equipment, and adequate facilities that nurture a learning environment. Also critical to this nurturing environment are faculty who are accessible, and academic support services such as tutoring labs and assessment centers.

The Commission recognizes that in a period of limited resources, it has become necessary that many institutions become selective in scheduling courses. Institutions cannot afford to offer every course every term. Unfortunately, this can result in an increase in the number of terms it takes a student to graduate. From the students' viewpoint, this keeps them from graduating in the traditional four-year period and entering into the labor market.

"The heart of any great educational system is the student, the learner."

- Institutions need to examine means to become more flexible in their graduation requirements, such as allowing alternative classes and prerequisites, if they are going to more severely limit course availability.

- The Commission's intent is not to reduce graduation standards but to provide reasonable, equivalent alternatives that will address students' needs to meet graduation requirements within the traditional four-year period.

- Neighboring institutions are encouraged to cooperate with each other whenever possible to schedule courses so that when one offers the course, the other one might not. Such exchanges truly put students' needs at the forefront.

No career field will be exempt from an increasing focus on international issues. All students will need an international perspective in their field of study. Global awareness also means that our students must strive to become competitive on a world scale.

- Our students must be prepared to become good citizens of the world. Institutions can promote an international focus through courses in languages; geography; international studies including history, politics, and economics; and activities that increase cultural and international awareness.

We live in a world where literacy is increasingly measured by the number of languages a person speaks, what technology the person understands, and whether behavior is sensitive to the cultures of others.

- Our students must be competent in languages in addition to English, as well as in the sciences, mathematics, humanities, and the many other subjects relevant to a global society.

Services which the institution offers to support and enhance the quality of student life are fundamental to the college experience. Boards are responsible for this aspect of the welfare of students and need to ensure that the institution provides adequate student activities and services within the ability of their resources. These services may include such elements as student centers, counseling, career planning and placement, minority/non-traditional student programs, cultural centers, and student government.

- The Commission advises institutions to monitor the type and quality of student services, as well as the proportion of expenditures spent on student services, to ensure that the services do not decline over the years, especially if there is a need for more student support for the institution to be competitive and comply with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

- Some institutions may be concerned that such services are costly and would exist at the expense of instruction. The Commission believes it is more important that institutions maintain their commitment to student success by focused instructional programming than to offer too many programs with less student success.

Our institutions also have a responsibility to their students that goes beyond the classroom. Students have a right to expect a campus environment that promotes a healthy lifestyle and is both safe and drug-free. Each campus can provide services and programs toward this goal.

- The personal safety of students on our campuses is a concern throughout all of postsecondary education. The Commission supports and encourages efforts to ensure that campuses are free of illegal drugs and violence.

Both human and fiscal resources dictate that the state cannot meet everyone's postsecondary needs. Nebraska's participation in consortia will allow Nebraskans to enroll in programs in other states at reasonable cost and, at the

same time, bring other students into our state for programs in which we specialize.

- The Commission recommends that Nebraska institutions actively participate in educational consortia that provide a reasonable means to increase educational opportunities for the people of the state.

Meeting Employers' Needs

Central to the Commission's vision is the belief that postsecondary education should contribute to the prosperity of Nebraska's economy. Citizens use postsecondary education to prepare for future jobs. Professions and businesses look to the postsecondary institutions for responsible, skilled, and creative employees and colleagues. Cooperation and communication between educators and employers will help assure these two expectations are met.

Postsecondary education plays a key role in Nebraska's economic development. Development of human resources is the framework that strengthens effective organizations. Postsecondary education provides the means toward career success and personal satisfaction. Responsive postsecondary education also draws new businesses to our state and assists new and existing businesses within the state.

The economy in some rural areas, as well as in inner-city metropolitan areas, requires particular attention.

- Through cooperative efforts with rural and urban centers, together with minority leaders and businesses, postsecondary educational institutions can help encourage new businesses and maintain existing businesses that support local economies.

Postsecondary education also provides a vital service through technology transfer from institutional research to businesses within and outside our state. Not only do commercial interests profit, but also the state, through a strengthened economy and increased competitiveness.

- Employers want to hire people who have skills required in the work place. Postsecondary education must provide relevant course work and capable graduates who meet employers' needs for skilled, professional and knowledgeable employees.

- Postsecondary education institutions can assist employee retraining and upgrading programs within their institutional role and mission. Such programs can be developed by both private and public institutions as in-house training, training in cooperation with industry associations, and customized training programs offered on the campus.

- Postsecondary educational institutions will serve the state's economic development goals by providing human resource development and assistance to new and small businesses, particularly those that are minority-owned or located in rural Nebraska communities.

- To succeed in today's global economy, Nebraska's businesses and industries need employees who understand other countries' cultures, languages, economics and politics. Postsecondary education institutions can work with employers to provide courses, workshops and other activities that increase cultural and international awareness.

- The Commission supports the transfer of research-produced technology from our institutions to benefit the state's businesses.

Meeting Citizens' Needs

Postsecondary educational institutions, through their public service missions, can and do serve many needs of Nebraskans. Foremost among these needs is the knowledge necessary for our citizens to make informed decisions about the many complex public issues that challenge contemporary society. Higher education has an important role to play as a resource for public policy analysis and research as well as a resource for citizen education about public issues.

- Rural Nebraskans particularly need increased access to educational programming, services, technologies, and expertise that will help their businesses and communities compete and stay abreast of changes that will impact them. Postsecondary education institutions can facilitate access to educational, technological, and cultural opportunities in rural areas to the extent their resources permit.

- As increasing numbers of non-English speaking persons enter our state, English as a Second Language, citizenship courses, and other educational programs are needed to help them successfully participate in our society.

- Illiteracy is a problem within our state as it is throughout the nation. Illiteracy limits both the quality of life of many of our citizens and the productivity of our state's work force. Postsecondary education, and community colleges in particular, must help address this issue by providing accessible literacy programs throughout the state.

- Adequate health care, especially to rural areas, is a critical issue which postsecondary education can help resolve through health education services accessible throughout the state. As a part of this solution, the University of Nebraska Medical Center can continue to actively recruit and train professionals who want to serve rural areas.

"It is unacceptable to expect students to succeed in an educational environment that is unaware of or unresponsive to their needs."

- The escalating cost of health care is another issue that demands the attention of the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

- The protection of our environment is another critical issue facing Nebraskans along with all citizens of the world. Postsecondary education can provide leadership in both public education, to inform citizens of the issues; and research, to discover better ways to protect our environment.

Postsecondary educational institutions also make Nebraskans' lives more satisfying through the many cultural opportunities they supply or bring to the state.

- Museums, performing arts centers, speaker programs and other such activities which provide valuable services and resources for the state's citizens deserve postsecondary education's support.

- Preparing Nebraska's students and citizens for global opportunities and competition requires introducing an international perspective into institutions, faculties, programs and activities.

Chapter Six
Create Exemplary Educational Institutions

The Commission believes Nebraskans want their state to have an exemplary postsecondary education system. Exemplary suggests achieving such high quality that the system becomes a model for others to emulate.

- The Commission believes that success in building an exemplary educational system requires steadfast commitment to our students and their education; prioritization of efforts within teaching, research and public service; interdisciplinary efforts within education that make the most efficient use of resources; and accountability through measurable outcomes appropriate to each institution's specific role and mission.

- The Commission encourages the state's colleges and universities to regularly assess their basic assumptions about Nebraska's people, their needs, their schools, and their resources. The Commission will assist by sharing pragmatic information about changing demographic, economic and societal conditions as well as academic information about when, how, and why schools succeed and states prosper.

- The faculty, staff, students, administrators and governing boards of postsecondary educational institutions have primary responsibility for maintaining and strengthening the quality of their institutions.

Whether Nebraska's high school students with the highest ability remain in Nebraska for postsecondary education is one test of whether they perceive Nebraska's institutions as exemplary. Currently, a disproportionate number of the students leaving the state are high achievers. Nebraska can reverse this trend through exemplary institutions that attract Nebraska's most qualified students.

Accountability

Outcomes can be a positive vehicle to help sell the excellence of each institution and specific departments within the institution. The Commission believes that knowledge of outcomes, such as job placement rates of graduates, can attract students to institutions within our state.

- The Commission urges each public institution of postsecondary education to evaluate measurable outcomes appropriate to its role and

mission. Accountability of the institutions and of their administrations includes appropriate measurable outcomes that indicate quality. The following may be appropriate outcomes measures depending on the role and mission of the institution and the program:

— Student retention . . . such as the percent of matriculating students who return as sophomores.

— Graduation levels . . . the percentage of degree-seeking students who actually graduate.

"Merely stating that we provide excellence in education is not enough"

— Advancement . . . the percent of graduating students who pursue further education.

— Job placement rates . . . the percent of graduating students who obtain jobs commensurate with their college preparation.

— Outstanding performance . . . students, faculty, administrators, programs, services, and innovations in instruction, research and public service that are recognized by peers, the public, or professional organizations as meritorious examples.

— Quality of teaching . . . measured by evaluation by students, graduates, employers, etc.

— Research . . . measured by research funds flowing into institutions, use of research in the classroom, and regard by peers.

— Public Service . . . measured by quality and quantity of public service projects and evaluation by recipients and participants.

— Ability to attract students . . . such as the number of students who come to the institution from out-of-state and from out-of-the-country.

— Satisfaction . . . based on evaluation surveys from students, alumni, the public, and employers.

- Increased use of information technologies will encourage the development of additional methods to measure student learning outcomes.

- The Commission and institutions, where appropriate, can build outcomes data bases to adapt to measures of student progress.

- Accountability includes institutional evaluation of the administrative leadership of each institution. The Commission believes the management structures at the sector and institutional levels should be efficient and effective, and that administrators should exhibit flexibility in adapting to Nebraska's demographics and changing environment.

Information and Instructional Technologies

Expanded use of distance learning and other instructional technologies is a key strategy in broadening access to postsecondary education and life-long learning for Nebraska citizens and in improving learning and teaching processes throughout the state's higher education institutions. In addition to meeting student needs and improving access to postsecondary education, expanded use of instructional technologies also provides a tool that helps our institutions to change and become more effective, more efficient, more comprehensive, and more student-centered.

In addition, the expanded use of information technologies, including data processing hardware, software and other services, can improve learning, teaching and other key processes of higher education institutions. Virtually every key process and program within higher education ultimately will involve the use of information technology.

- The Commission proposes that the state and its postsecondary education institutions commit to using information technologies that will help them become more effective, more efficient, more relevant and more student-centered.

- Expanded use of informational technologies will greatly expand the information resources available to students and faculty and can lead to increases in learning and teaching productivity.

- Each institution is encouraged to develop and update regularly standards for instructional and other information technologies based on best practice guidelines, such as those developed by the North Central Association and other such regional and national associations. In addition, institutions are encouraged to share their descriptions of standards with other institutions in the state.

- The University of Nebraska, State Colleges and Community Colleges are encouraged to set appropriate expectations and requirements for students and faculty regarding the use of information technologies.

- Institutions are encouraged to use instructional technologies as a way to increase learning productivity including effective use of student-centered and self-paced learning activities.

- Institutions are encouraged to use exemplary instructional technology programs that are purchased from or shared by other organizations in addition to programs developed by people associated with each institution.

"To reach these expectations, Nebraska's institutions must undergo a continual process of re-examination."

- Institutions are encouraged to consider the option of outsourcing various information system operations.

Faculty

Attracting, nurturing, and retaining high quality faculty, administrators, and other staff are additional components of an exemplary educational system. Evaluations, promotions, competitive salaries, professional development opportunities and appropriate recognition for achievement can encourage and motivate faculty and staff.

- Each institution needs to assure that its faculty members are well prepared to teach through its hiring qualifications, professional development opportunities, on-going evaluations and clearly set expectations for achievement in the classroom and, when appropriate, in areas of research, scholarship and other creative activity.

- The Commission encourages and supports efforts to motivate faculty and staff to high levels of achievement. Adequate resources, facilities, salaries and professional development opportunities are important to these efforts.

While faculty roles may change as a result of new instructional technologies, faculty will remain central to the learning process. To insure optimum usage of instructional technologies, educators must have the training and institutional support necessary to infuse technology into the teaching process in order to maximize students' learning potential. Investment by the state and the institutions in faculty training and program development will

encourage the adoption and effective use on our campuses of new learning and instructional technologies.

- Institutions are encouraged to provide supportive environments and professional development opportunities that allow faculty to acquire the technical skills needed to utilize fully new learning and instructional technologies in the classroom and lab.

- Institutions are urged to develop faculty reward structures that encourage faculty to embrace new learning technologies and to share their ideas for the successful development and use of new learning and instructional technologies with other faculty and institutions.

The Commission acknowledges that distance learning instructional technologies are not the sole answer for all geographic access issues. Obviously, there is a great value to the learning environment of a college campus that distance learning technologies cannot offer. Instructional technologies will not lead to the demise of the classroom or the campus. Instead, college students and faculty may choose from a spectrum of learning environments from the traditional to the innovative. The new technologies open many doors of access that would otherwise remain shut due to geographical distances and/or limited state resources.

- For instructional technologies to become more effective as an educational tool, the Commission believes educators must find methods to sustain the culture and contacts of an educational campus within the new technology. Faculty must be extensively involved in this process.

Institutions will provide a broader, more progressive and less biased education if students associate with faculty, staff and peers who represent differing races, cultures, ages and genders. Additionally, the substance of education can provide an international and multi-cultural perspective. For instance, a student of literature is deprived of much great writing and thought if only exposed to the works of British and American writers.

- Students will solve problems more creatively when they consider opinions and alternatives that represent differing races, cultures, ages and genders.

- Diversity in faculty, staff, administrators, student bodies and curriculum will help our institutions become more exemplary and our state become more competitive.

Global Awareness

Exemplary education prepares students for the world in which they will live and work.

- Global awareness is critical for every education system today. Faculty should be encouraged to bring a focus on global awareness into classes and activities.

- Faculty development plans that focus on understanding other countries and cultures deserve high priority.

Planning

Good planning is instrumental to exemplary institutions so they can respond positively to changes. The improvement of quality as a major long-range goal requires that campus expenditure patterns reflect the role and mission approved by the Commission and the educational priorities established by the governing boards. All planning must ultimately provide the opportunity for high quality learning by every student. Commission review of master plans from the state's postsecondary educational institutions can help the institutions plan for the future in a coordinated manner.

- The Commission relies on governance and administration within Nebraska institutions to provide creative, efficient and flexible leadership and planning that will help institutions achieve exemplary status.

- Telecommunications offer institutions the opportunity to share high quality programs and outstanding teachers with one another. Such exchanges will broaden and enrich the educational experience of students at more institutions and provide greater efficiency in use of the state's resources.

Chapter Seven
Create Partnerships

Educational Bridges

Learning continues throughout life. Thus the Commission sees education as a seamless continuum from pre-school through graduate school that sets the stage for lifelong learning.

- An integrated system of education must have specific policies and partnerships between educational sectors and institutions.

- A foremost policy is that education through postsecondary levels become more "portable" to facilitate access. This transferability means that students can participate in a continuum of opportunities, each flowing smoothly toward the other, vertically and horizontally.

Education does not exist in a vacuum. Nor do the many levels of education function well when isolated from one another. All will thrive best when partnerships are carefully developed between them and with other aspects of Nebraska life.

Exemplary postsecondary education depends on an alliance with the elementary and secondary schools. Students, in particular, will profit when each institution and school understands the programs at other levels.

- Postsecondary educational institutions are encouraged to inform secondary school administrators, teachers and counselors of their programs, services and expectations of entering students.

- Postsecondary educational institutions are encouraged to inform secondary school administrators and counselors about the academic performance of recent graduates of the high school in college courses. Institutions need to provide information of sufficient detail to enable the high school to evaluate its effectiveness in preparing students for postsecondary education and to modify its curriculum, if necessary, to improve student achievement.

- The Commission encourages postsecondary educational institutions to develop programs that offer assistance, if requested, to any high school in its service area that seeks to evaluate its curriculum and to improve its

effectiveness in preparing students for college courses. The program could be a collaborative effort between high school teachers and college faculty.

Some high school students demonstrate the academic skills and maturity that signal a readiness for college-level courses. Collaborative efforts between institutions and schools to provide challenging educational opportunities for academically-gifted students represent sound educational practice and efficient use of public resources.

- The Commission supports programs which provide college-level academic transfer courses for academically qualified high school students. Such programs expand educational opportunities for capable high school students and result in more efficient use of educational resources.

  — The Commission supports the use of programs that provide opportunities for high school students to earn college credits and that provide external validation of student academic achievement at the college level. An example of this kind of program is the College Board's Advanced Placement Program.

  — The Commission also supports programs that allow qualified high school students to enroll along with college students in courses offered on college and university campuses.

  — If those two options are not feasible, colleges and universities are encouraged to offer college-level academic courses in the high school in close collaboration with the high school. The instruction may be by traditional classroom delivery, by instructional technology, or by some combination of the two. Such courses would promote equality of educational opportunity throughout the state. Student eligibility, course curriculum, access to instructional materials, student performance evaluation, and faculty qualifications and selection process should be equivalent to those for courses offered on the college campus.

Nebraska's independent colleges and universities and private career institutions are valuable educational resources to the state.

- The Coordinating Commission shall promote more dialogue with private postsecondary colleges and universities and private career schools

to create and sustain positive working relationships between postsecondary institutions.

Communication and cooperation partnerships should move beyond Nebraska's borders. This will expand educational options for Nebraskans and at the same time bring out-of-state students into the state, which may help increase diversity on Nebraska's campuses.

- Nebraska should support compacts with other states and regions to help enable each other to meet common educational challenges.

- The Commission endorses participation by all Nebraska public postsecondary institutions in the Midwestern Higher Education Commission Compact to the extent that is appropriate to their role and mission and available resources.

Sharing Technologies for Greater Efficiency and Effectiveness

Effective use of information and instructional technologies in many cases will be advanced through collaborative activities and sometimes through participation in formal networks.

The policies of the state need to support and encourage the use of productive information and instructional technologies within higher education. The Nebraska Information Technology Commission (NITC) can help serve as a vehicle for the planning and coordination of information technology issues within the state of Nebraska. The NITC's responsibilities include prioritizing educational needs that could be met cost effectively through the use of information technology, recommending a plan for funding projects to address identified needs, and adopting policies and guidelines for acceptable cost-effective use of information technology in education.

- The Commission views instructional technologies as an educational and public service function of the Community Colleges, State Colleges and University of Nebraska, and encourages these sectors to work together through the NITC to provide the best possible access to education by all citizens of Nebraska.

    — Through the NITC, postsecondary educational institutions can share their individual technology plans and standards, explore methods to cooperate in the development and use of informational and instructional technology, and develop joint plans for addressing

current and future educational needs through the use of new technologies.

— The Commission urges the NITC to help create and maintain a plan for the development and use of computer and telecommunications systems that will benefit education at all levels throughout the state.

"These partnerships also will serve to bridge gaps within the state between east and west, cities and rural communities, rich and poor, educated and under-educated."

— The Commission will work with the NITC to help identify information technology priorities for higher education through a process that considers the objectives of the statewide technology plans, the individual institution's goals and plans, the needs of the student and faculty, the use of existing "best practices," and the overall effectiveness and cost efficiency of the proposed project.

— The NITC, with representatives from both higher education and K/12 education, provides an excellent vehicle for promoting articulation and cooperation among postsecondary education institutions as well as between postsecondary education and K/12. The Commission encourages the NITC to explore new initiatives that effectively utilize instructional technologies to share expertise, improve articulation, expand learning opportunities, and help create a more "seamless" educational system for the citizens of our state.

The rapidly expanding use of new instructional technologies makes cooperative ventures with institutions and entities from outside of the state as critical as those with institutions within the state. Cooperative, technology-based projects, including in-state projects such as the NITC, as well as multi-state initiatives such as the Western Governors University and the Midwest Higher Education Commission, have the potential to bring beneficial programs to the state, to save our state and its students money, and to encourage an increase in reciprocity and articulation agreements that will expand education opportunities.

- The Commission encourages the state of Nebraska and its public and private postsecondary education institutions to collaborate and cooperate with entities such as the Western Governors University to increase access to postsecondary education and enhance educational opportunities within our state. Nebraska institutions will benefit from participation and/or cooperation with entities, such as the Western Governors University, that allow them to expand their own markets across state

lines to new student populations, while also importing the expertise of other institutions to broaden the learning experiences of Nebraska students.

- Effective student services are critical to the success of many students, no matter if it is a traditional residential college or university of a "virtual university."

  — The Commission endorses the WGU's use of local centers throughout participating states to provide student assessment, advising and other student support services at the community level. These local centers will be student-centered and designed to meet the potential needs of a variety of students.

Linkages with Businesses and Communities

The Commission believes partnerships between postsecondary educational institutions and businesses, agencies, and communities hold great promise for Nebraska. Coalitions formed by a wide range of leaders can help guide institutions to educate and/or train students for the economic and social realities they will encounter. Community level partnerships can include joint planning, collaborative research, and cooperative education and training programs. The Commission can be a catalyst for such collaboration to aid positive reactions to new and continuing challenges.

- Postsecondary institutions are advised to continue to explore how they can serve other constituencies, such as agriculture, business, government agencies, cultural and recreation groups, community organizations, and families.

The baby boom generation, which is the predominant age group within our state and nation, is now approaching middle-age. For the next several years, the state's work force will increasingly be made up of middle-aged and older workers. Many of these workers will need to return to college for additional education, training and retraining to meet demands of the changing work place or to enter into new careers as the job market shifts. Nebraska's postsecondary educational institutions and employers must collaborate to assure that such training is accessible, affordable and relevant to the changing job market.

- To assure Nebraska's postsecondary institutions are helping the state's economic development and serving the students needs, its imperative

that appropriate courses translate into marketable skills and conceptual thinking. This includes credit programs leading to degrees as well as short-term, continuing education programs that assist in retraining and upgrading workers.

- The Commission anticipates that postsecondary education, in particular community colleges, will continually explore how to efficiently deliver more educational services in the work place.

Postsecondary education is intimately tied to the economic development of the state. With 13 public colleges and universities, 17 independent colleges and universities and dozens of private career schools, postsecondary educational institutions pump millions of dollars into local economies simply by the impact of the institutions' payrolls. When considering the purchases made by students, local economies are enriched by many more millions of dollars which, by the multiplier effect, translate postsecondary education as a major economic force in Nebraska. In addition, Nebraska postsecondary educational institutions are a causal factor for tax revenue at all levels.

In another context, institutions can communicate with community and business leaders and with one another about economic and social issues. Through the transfer of technology produced by research at our institutions, postsecondary education can help businesses remain competitive and on the cutting edge of new and emerging technologies. Here also, telecommunications can facilitate partnerships between education and business that hold great promise.

- The Commission endorses linkages between academic research at our institutions and industrial research within the state to the extent that staff and institutional integrity is not compromised.

- Representatives of postsecondary education and business need to further explore the use of instructional technology as a means of meeting business training needs, providing educational opportunities at the work site, and facilitating transfer of technology between education and business.

- The Commission appreciates and supports the relationship between the State Department of Economic Development and postsecondary educational institutions. The Commission offers to assist to enhance the

effectiveness of the relationships between the institutions and the DED, and serve the needs of the state.

- The Commission endorses partnerships between postsecondary education and nonprofit organizations, which have increasing responsibility for meeting social, economic and cultural needs of our citizens.

Chapter Eight
Operate High Quality Institutions Within the Context of Limited Resources

Nebraska's postsecondary educational institutions have the confidence of the Commission. Therefore, the Commission has high expectations of them. The Commission believes that governing boards also have high regard for both what their institutions have accomplished and what they are capable of accomplishing.

For many years, governing boards have sought to do more with less. Regrettably, the Commission offers no panacea for limited institutional resources. The total of all of our educational wants and needs is beyond the capacity of the available resources.

"Nebraska cannot afford to provide an educational program in response to every citizen's interest."

- Postsecondary educational leaders are encouraged to focus on the effective and efficient utilization and management of limited educational resources for purposes of attaining optimal educational results.

- Institutions will become more exemplary by prioritization, refinement and a shifting of resources by design. They must maximize their effectiveness and ensure academic, societal and fiscal accountability. To do so will require questioning of basic assumptions and traditions about needs and service.

The roles and missions of each educational institution and how they weave together to serve postsecondary educational needs in Nebraska have been addressed in this Comprehensive Plan. The Commission calls on institutions to examine their programs, budgets, and facility plans within the context of role and mission and the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. As they do this, the institutions may discover that there has been some unintentional slippage from their assigned role and mission. With the dawning of the Comprehensive Plan for postsecondary education in Nebraska comes an excellent opportunity for institutions to undergo a reexamination to determine priorities and focus on the appropriate roles and missions.

Through the Commission's statutory responsibilities to review and approve instructional programs, to review and modify or recommend modification of institutions' budgets to the Legislature and Governor, and to review and

approve capital construction projects, the Commission has the ability to facilitate achievement of the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. The Commission prefers, however, that institutions take this responsibility upon themselves through their own program review, budget development and facility planning.

When funding for postsecondary education shifts drastically up and down in a yo-yo effect from one year to the next, long-range planning and overall efficiency suffer. The Commission recognizes the state itself is susceptible to fluctuating revenues as it is pushed and pulled by economic forces over which it has little control.

- It is important that the postsecondary educational institutions have a stable funding platform upon which they can plan.

- It is important, to the extent that the executive and legislative branches can provide, that the institutions have some basis of assurance of their priority in the state's spending plan.

- Postsecondary educational funding should reflect the commitment of the legislative and executive branches to achieve the educational goals set forth in this Comprehensive Plan.

- Postsecondary educational funding should be sufficient enough to provide salaries and professional development opportunities that will attract and retain high quality faculty and staff at our institutions.

- Institutions are encouraged to bolster efforts to attract outside funds, private as well as public. Examples include attracting public and private funds for specific job training activities which enhance the state's economic development and help lessen unemployment. Attracting funds in support and recognition of exemplary teaching also enhances an institution's reputation within the educational community.

- Institutions need to include provisions for funding fluctuations in their strategic plans in order to more effectively deal with fluctuations when they do occur.

Program Review

Instructional programs are at the core of all postsecondary educational institutions regardless of the strength of their research or public service roles.

Regular review of these programs is vital to our institutions if they are to offer strong, exemplary programs that serve needs. Governing boards of each institution are responsible for this review to ensure quality, determine that needs are met, and to set priorities for budgets. However, the Coordinating Commission, with its responsibility for program review and authority to continue or discontinue instructional programs, can direct postsecondary education toward the goals set forth in this Comprehensive Plan.

- The Commission believes that programs that cannot be maintained at sufficiently high quality with achievement of other outcomes at an acceptable cost must be abandoned to allow for strengthening of exemplary programs and creation of needed new programs. Institutions that spread themselves too thinly, risk performing tasks inadequately. Some of these tasks are better performed by others.

- Exemplary program planning demands elimination of existing instructional programs which are marginal in terms of outcomes and centrality to instructional role and mission.

- The Commission expects focused attention by governing boards to exert leadership to discontinue non-viable programs and to reformulate marginal programs toward goal achievement.

- Governing boards are asked to take the initiative to review their programs within the context of compliance with role and mission and the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

- While some extension of programming may be reasonable, the Commission expects institutional leaders to propose only those new programs that are appropriate to role and mission, meet the needs of students, and advance the goals of the state within this Comprehensive Plan.

- Program review must serve as a fulcrum to balance the access needs of the citizens and the employee skill needs of employers with the resource capabilities of the institutions and the state.

- Program review must evaluate the need for public institutions' instructional programs in light of programs available in the private sector, other states and through telecommunications technology.

- The Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education and postsecondary education's institutional leadership must avoid unnecessary program duplication and must deter unnecessary proliferation of new program offerings.

- Programming and course work delivered to Nebraska via distance learning technology from institutions located in other states will come under Commission review only when such institutions offer one or more courses for college credit on an established schedule at locations other than the students' place of residence or a business that is offering course work for their own employees.

- The Coordinating Commission will not erect unnecessary hurdles that interfere with programs designed to meet short-term job training needs.

Budget Review

In addition to program review, the budget process is an important state-level strategy to address priorities and implement efficiency improvements. The ultimate goal of reexamining priorities and improving efficiency is to realign resources to those services and activities most important to postsecondary education's mission and to seek effective use of funds.

The Commission does not envision less money spent on postsecondary education. The Commission does foresee spending money somewhat differently than in the past. We cannot expect continuation of everything institutions now provide at the level of quality we must demand to become exemplary.

- Within the reality of limited resources, institutional quality can be maintained and enhanced through a reallocation of resources.

- To provide exemplary institutions within the context of limited resources, institutions are counseled to identify priorities based on role and mission; needs; and financial, human and physical resources. Institutions will become stronger and achieve goals that reflect an exemplary condition when budgeting and programming decisions accurately reflect their priorities.

- To obtain productive use of available resources, the Commission recommends that postsecondary educational institution's governing boards:

— Incorporate an institutional organization that emphasizes educational delivery over administration.

— Explore technologies that enhance learning while delivering it more efficiently.

— Demand accountability through measurable student outcomes; management review based on performance evaluation of faculty and staff; and systematic assessment of financial and resource needs, allocation and results at each institution.

- Shifting of resources within postsecondary education is necessary to accommodate specific goals set forth in this plan. By setting specific priorities upon which to base their plans and budgets, institutions will accomplish long-term objectives.

- As resources become more limited, commitments to statewide goals such as racial and cultural diversity should not be reduced.

Academic support services include key learning resources, most conspicuously the library and computer equipment, as well as a host of other activities which promote the academic mission of the institution. Academic activities depend on support services to be effective. When resource shortages occur, budgets are too often balanced at their expense.

- Institutions are advised to monitor the percentage of total expenditures devoted to academic support services to maintain balance that yields effective instruction.

Essential to development and maintenance of quality is effective strategic planning. It is decidedly easier, of course, to plan for quality if there are no fiscal constraints. It is evident, however, that Nebraska's postsecondary institutions must plan to operate for the foreseeable future under conditions of rather severe fiscal constraints.

- Governing boards can assure that their planning, management and decision-making processes are structured to achieve goals and objectives.

The Commission will tend to give favorable consideration to promising budget proposals which improve higher educational opportunities and effectiveness through the following methods:

- Beneficial use of information technologies.

- Beneficial collaborative activities with other institutions and networks of organizations.

While the Commission can influence priorities and efficiency improvement through its various statewide review authorities, identifying and implementing specific efficiency improvements ultimately depends upon efforts of governing boards, campuses, academic and administrative units, and individual faculty and staff members. It requires commitment and involvement at all levels within postsecondary education.

- To become more efficient, governing boards need to seek, whenever and wherever possible, to reduce and/or eliminate unnecessary duplication in program offerings and in all operations of public institutions.

- Administrative duplication or excess is a drain on scarce resources. Since administrative expenditures do not directly produce instruction, research or public service outcomes, administrative functions can best be evaluated in terms of their support for the primary functions relative to the resources they require.

Budget development and efficiency are clearly related. Efficiency improvement resulting in cost-savings makes these resources available for use in implementing postsecondary educational priorities. Thus, efficiency improvements can be viewed as a source of funds in the budgeting process.

- The Commission believes expanded budget requests should be formulated with an emphasis on specific outcomes to recognize and promote excellence in teaching, support goals that promote diversity and equity, monitor faculty workload, and continue efforts to identify efficiencies that can be achieved with existing resources.

- To maintain exemplary institutions, it is incumbent upon governing boards and administrators to provide and maintain competitive salaries, adequate libraries, and sufficient equipment and facilities to provide an appropriate learning environment.

- The Commission cautions that dormitories, student centers, food services, and other auxiliary operations which are created and operated as

independent, self-supporting entities should not be a drain on institutional resources.

- The use of new technologies in non-instructional areas, such as library automation and the electronic distribution of transcripts, can facilitate increased efficiency among administrative functions.

- In this Plan, the Commission has called for community colleges to assume primary responsibility for most developmental education. Limited new state funds and a reallocation of existing state funds is needed to implement this developmental effort.

An institution's financial condition relates to the assets and liabilities of the institution at a moment in time. The assets must be adequate for the institution to fulfill its mission, while the liabilities must not become a barrier to that mission.

An increasingly important factor in an institution's financial condition is debt management. Debt can provide the leverage required to obtain needed assets, such as new buildings and equipment, and to make investments in the future. However, debt obligations can also constrain future initiatives by restricting available funds for new ventures and increasing the cost of capital.

- Institutions need to determine their optimal debt level by analyzing the impact of borrowing on current and future operating costs. Debt service (principal and interest), as well as recurring maintenance costs of new facilities, must be estimated and built into future operating budgets.

Incentive Fund Policy

The Commission sees incentive funds as a valid basis upon which to achieve outcomes.

- The Commission supports the concept of incentive funding which facilitates initiatives in compliance with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan or facilitates achievement of the Commission's coordinative functions.

- Institutions of higher education might be challenged to expand instructional technologies within their normal operating budgets. A state incentive grant fund could help with the training of faculty in the use of

instructional technologies as well as the development and purchase of instructional programs using instructional technologies.

Tuition and Financial Aid Guidelines

In comparison to other states, Nebraska has experienced and benefitted from a high rate of participation in postsecondary education. This high participation has been a positive factor for the state and will continue to be critical to Nebraska's future. The Commission concludes the existing relationship between public monies (state appropriation and, in the case of community colleges, property taxes), tuition and financial aid generally has been successful in promoting access to postsecondary education.

- Adjustments in funding relationships may be necessary to maintain the high participation rate in postsecondary education and at the same time enable the institutions to maintain a level of operation which assures that students have the opportunity to achieve their academic goals.

- Future changes in the structure and/or responsibility of the sectors may be another reason for considering reallocation of funds, changes in the method of state support, or new tuition levels. Likewise, changes in national educational programs and/or policies could also bring about changes in tuition and state appropriations.

In a situation where all revenue sources in support of education are being considered, it is appropriate that increased tuition and fees be among the options. Excessively low tuition and fees may yield inadequate resources to appropriately pay faculty, maintain facilities and provide equipment and technology necessary to prepare students for competition in the global economy.

- Incremental changes in tuition and fees, for undergraduate, graduate and non-resident students, are appropriate. Such changes may result from changes in an institution's operating budget, and/or may be related to changes in the higher education price index, in the consumer price index within the institution's service area, or in tuition levels within peer groups.

    — The Commission supports the policy that each public institution reaps the benefit of retaining the revenue from increased tuition and fees and enrollment increases.

— Conversely, if enrollment declines, the Commission believes that institutions should recognize that accompanying declines in tuition and fee revenues may not automatically be replaced by state resources.

- Consideration should be given that tuition and financial aid recommendations not have the effect of denying access to students who are qualified to take advantage of the unique programs and opportunities which may only be available at a particular institution of higher education in the state.

- The Commission and the institutions should monitor the impact of increases in tuition on participation in postsecondary education. Any increases in tuition and fees other than the most marginal would call for stronger financial aid programs to assure that needy full-time and part-time students are provided educational options. The Coordinating Commission will work with state government and postsecondary educational leaders to establish that tuition policies, state funding and student financial aid programs meet the educational needs of Nebraska citizens, especially the financially needy.

Institutional role and mission is a basis upon which numerous distinctions may be made, including distinctions concerning tuition levels.

- The Commission favors tuition and fee rates which fall at a level within each sector that is appropriate to that sector's role and mission.

  — Community colleges will have the lowest tuition of the three sectors, as they will remain the sector with the broadest access. To keep community college tuition at a level that encourages public access, it may be necessary for community colleges to receive increased state support.

  — The State Colleges, which have a role and mission focusing on undergraduate and limited graduate-degree education, will have the mid-range level of tuition and fees of the three sectors. Tuition levels at these regional institutions will be maintained at levels which continue to encourage access to the citizens of their regions.

  — The University campuses, having both more comprehensive and more differentiated missions which encompass research, medicine

and extensive graduate-level programming, will have the highest and most differentiated tuition rate of the three sectors, based on each institution's role and mission.

- When considering the responsibility of the state as compared to the student in funding public postsecondary education, the Commission believes the majority of the cost of education should be borne by the public. Differentiations exist from institution to institution and sector to sector with regard to the amount of money the state contributes for a student's education through public monies, as compared to the amount the student contributes through tuition and mandatory fees. This differentiation should reflect the differing roles and missions of the institutions, as stated above. In determining appropriate shares of the cost of education, the Commission will clearly define which educational costs should be included. The Commission supports the following differentiations:

  — At the community colleges, the students' share of their educational costs in comparison to the taxpayers' share of the cost of education, through state appropriation and local property tax combined, should be the lowest of the three public sectors.

  — At the State Colleges, the students' share of the total cost of their education should be more than the students' share at community colleges. However, the state's share of the total cost of education at State Colleges should still be substantially larger than the students' share.

  — Students at campuses of the University of Nebraska should pay a greater share of the cost of their education than students at the State Colleges and community colleges. Since the roles and missions of the University of Nebraska's four campuses differ from one another, the state's share of contribution to total educational costs at each campus should differ appropriately based on role and mission.

- In setting guidelines for rational and equitable tuition levels at public institutions in the state, consideration will be given to the following factors:

  — The role and mission of the institution

— Comparisons with tuition and fees at peer institutions

— Comparisons with regional institutions with which the particular institution competes for students

— Inflation rates, both Consumer Price Index (CPI) and Higher Education Price Index (HEPI).

— Economic factors within the institutions' geographic service areas which impact on the students' ability to pay, as well as statewide economic factors which impact on the state's ability to contribute to postsecondary education.

Out-of-state students account for a relatively low percentage of total student body at most of our state's public institutions, despite relatively low out-of-state tuition rates.

- The Commission believes the likelihood of substantially greater revenue from increasing the non-resident tuition rates is minimal in comparison to the benefits the institutions and the state receive from the presence of out-of-state and foreign students. These students bring money into the state, have the potential to become future members of our state's work force, often rank high in their classes, and can enhance diversity at our public postsecondary institutions.

Graduate-level programs attract students from throughout the state, country and world.

- The Commission believes the tuition for graduate level and professional courses should reflect the higher cost of these programs.

- As their graduate programs gain increased recognition, the institutions need to consider increasing graduate-level tuition and fees accordingly.

In addition to the corporation taxes that Nebraska businesses pay in support of postsecondary education, many businesses also provide additional financial support through educational benefits for employees. These include direct payment of tuition, tuition subsidies, and specialized education and training programs for employees.

- The Commission supports such efforts on the part of employers to maintain a well-educated work force. Institutions should strive to maintain tuition levels that encourage employers to continue to provide education benefits to their employees.

- Business needs to recognize the benefits they receive from postsecondary education institutions and support them financially, which will help our institutions maintain reasonable tuition levels.

The relatively low tuition at Nebraska public postsecondary institutions is, in itself, one form of financial aid that benefits all, regardless of need. However, as we plan for the future, the Commission sees a need for increased state-supported financial aid for the financially needy in order to further enhance access and promote diversity at our postsecondary educational institutions.

- The Commission strongly endorses more financial aid for needy students.

- It is the responsibility of each postsecondary educational institution to help its students find financial aid opportunities.

- The Commission will monitor federal financial aid programs and the impact they have on financial aid availability and distribution procedures within the state.

The Commission, in cooperation with the postsecondary educational institutions, will monitor the impact of these many differentiating factors on tuition and fees and, as appropriate, make recommendations regarding changes in and the rationale for tuition and fee policy.

Facilities Planning, Authorization and Funding

The traditional purpose for postsecondary educational facilities is as a vehicle to transmit the institution's services. The Commission recognizes the importance of high quality, well maintained facilities to support institutional efforts to offer exemplary programs. Concurrently, it is critical that proper planning for the construction, efficient use and maintenance of these facilities is accomplished within the context of our state's limited financial resources.

Boards and institutions are responsible to provide and maintain an adequate physical plant to house the institution's activities and to provide the equipment necessary to fulfill the institution's mission. Basic physical plant issues include preventative maintenance, deferred maintenance, efficiency, cost containment, and space utilization.

- To efficiently manage the state's resources, governing boards must monitor and take necessary action to utilize existing facilities to their fullest.

- Institutions need to protect the considerable physical plant investment that the citizens of Nebraska granted them. In the long-term, money is not saved by deferring facility maintenance. Nor are the long-term interests of the state served by omitting purchases of equipment needed to prepare exemplary graduates.

- Each institution is urged to establish an appropriate mix of space allocated to academic, research, administration, and student affairs functions.

- The Commission counsels institutions to monitor physical plant operating expenses and call for cost containment measures when necessary. Particular attention should be paid to energy and maintenance costs both in dollars and in share of the budget.

Change makes planning of facilities increasingly complex. This change is associated with new and emerging technologies, shifting demographics and enrollment patterns, new priorities, and initiatives prompted by the *Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education*. At a time of so much change, the Commission cautions against planning and building facilities that may reflect yesterday's thinking in contrast to tomorrow's needs.

- Increased use of information technologies has significant implications for planning and designing, utilizing and altering business facilities within higher education. The state, the institutions, and the Commission need to reexamine periodically the standards relating to facilities in light of changes brought forth by new technologies. Neither the state, nor its institutions, will want to have the drain of resources represented by excess and under-utilized facilities.

Facilities are perhaps the best example of how decisions of institutions are made concrete, with long-term effects on operating budgets and programs. Buildings constructed to meet today's immediate needs can block institutions from meeting needs of future generations. The same may also apply to buildings that are offered to institutions as gifts.

- The institutions' leaders need to have the vision to weigh the initial contribution of a gift with the long-term costs it brings with it. The ability of the institution to meet these long-term commitments without sacrificing the quality of necessary programs and services is the ultimate goal.

Institutions must also be forward thinking and address how changing technologies will affect future learning on their campuses. For example, in the near future, students may learn as much from computers in their dorm rooms as in the traditional classroom. This high-technology, non-classroom may connect students with the thinking of the finest scholars throughout the world. To build facilities today without careful consideration of such factors can create quickly obsolete facilities that become problems to be wrestled with by generations to follow.

- Governing boards and administrators are encouraged to rethink their long-range facilities planning process within the context of changing needs and consider options that can save the institutions', and consequently the state, resources and enable the institutions to meet changing needs. Flexibility is essential.

- Sharing facilities between institutions, allowing one institution to use existing, under-utilized facilities of another, needs to be considered as an efficient option to building new facilities. The Commission is aware that such cooperative arrangements have occurred between some institutions in the past and applauds these efforts.

- Consideration of branch campuses in the context of off-campus education, efficiency of facilities and unnecessary duplication is a vital factor in an overlay of facility planning.

- In the construction of new facilities, the Commission supports the continued use of traditional funding sources. Examples of current funding include the University and State College's use of student fees to construct and maintain dormitories, student centers, student health

services, food services; the use of state general revenue for instructional facilities and infrastructure projects; and the use of auxiliary funds for self-supporting facilities such as bookstores and child care centers.

This is the context for Commission review of institutional long-range plans, capital budget requests, and individual capital construction projects. A facilities data base and planning parameters developed on a statewide level are an essential foundation for this review. The Statewide Facilities Plan (Chapter 9) elaborates on these issues.

Chapter Nine
Statewide Facilities Plan

The Commission has determined the content of the Statewide Facilities Plan shall outline broad priorities, and also establish Commission policy regarding the review and approval or disapproval of capital projects and recommendations for long-range facilities plans and capital budget requests.

Public Institutional Facilities Planning, Authorization and Funding Process

Prior to the construction of any publicly funded or operated facility at a public postsecondary educational institution, a three-step process must be completed.

A long-range facilities plan is required by statute for any institution requesting funds for a project in excess of $100,000. These long-range facilities plans also require review by the Commission according to state legislation and the Commission's need to provide statewide coordination of institutional facilities.

From these long-range facilities plans, individual project needs are determined and submitted for authorization to institutional administrations, governing boards, the Commission and the Legislature.

After authorization of an individual project in concept, size and scope, funds may be requested from the Legislature for design and construction. As is typically the case, the number of authorized projects likely will exceed the capacity to fund these identified needs. The task of prioritizing authorized projects then falls on the same entities mentioned above. The Commission's role in the funding cycle is to recommend a unified statewide prioritization of public postsecondary educational facility needs to the Governor and the Legislature.

In order for this cyclical process to evolve efficiently, the Commission provides its review criteria for each of these three steps as follows.

Facilities Planning

The Commission review of institutional long-range facilities plans shall include, but not be limited to, the following criteria:

Assessment of how well an institution's long-range facilities plan supports the role and mission assignment of the institution.
Consistency of the facilities plan with the Commission approved role and mission assignment will be reviewed in the context of implementing instructional, research, public service and support programs as follows:

- The array of academic programs existing and projected during the life of the plan (minimum of ten years).

- Scope of research and public service activities.

- Unique institutional characteristics (e.g., cultural center for the community, inter-collegiate athletic program, host site for federal facilities).

- Significant new initiatives planned which have facilities implications.

Current and projected student enrollment and staffing
The extent to which current and projected enrollment and staffing are realistically characterized in the plan shall be considered, including but not limited to, the following:

- Enrollment information shall include overall size and composition of the student population. Enrollment by level, discipline and other significant characteristics such as part-time population, and residential/commuter mix have a major impact in determining facilities needs. These enrollment projections shall be made for the intended life of the plan.

- Size of faculty and staff required to support implementation of the institution's role and mission assignment.

- Student/Faculty ratios and class sizes proposed for determining facilities needs.

Assessment and analysis of an institution's existing and projected land and facilities needs.
The Commission shall review existing physical conditions of facilities and land holdings. The Commission shall also review a plan's assessment of required facilities and land needs to meet the role and mission assignments as discussed above. At a minimum, the following elements shall be reviewed:

- Existing facilities and land inventories shall be reviewed to lay the foundation on which the plan is based.

- The physical condition of existing buildings shall be reviewed, including use of an institution's Building Quality Survey.

- Assessment of the functional adequacy of buildings. This shall include a review of the adequacy of existing spaces to support the activities of faculty, students and staff.

- Utilization of existing facilities shall be reviewed by the Commission to determine optimal use of the state's resources.

- Assessment of the condition and capacity of an institution's infrastructure including power plant systems, parking, roads and walkways.

- Adequacy of existing land for building sites, parking, outdoor recreation, intercollegiate athletics, agricultural activities, circulation, landscaping or other needs shall be assessed.

- Capacity for future development and expansion capabilities of a campus's existing facilities and land holdings shall be reviewed.

- Space guideline calculations of space needs by room-use type shall be reviewed.

- Facilities information from peer institutions shall be reviewed, as appropriate.

- Externally mandated program standards shall be assessed (e.g., animal research facilities, medical facilities).

- Specific new activities which will need to be accommodated on the campus over at least the next ten years will be accessed.

Assessment of identified needs based on the preceding analysis of existing facilities and program and service needs.
The Commission shall review plans developed to accommodate identified facilities and land needs. These plans shall be in effect for the intended life of the plan and shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Land use, acquisition and/or divestiture plans.
- Building use plans for each program of the institution.
- Restoration plans of facilities to meet minimum physical condition standards, including infrastructure.
- Renovation plans to meet programmatic standards, to provide more appropriate support for proposed users, or to provide access to the disabled.
- Vehicular and pedestrian circulation and parking plans.
- Utilities extensions and improvement plans.
- New construction plans.
- Site development plans.
- Method to update the institution's long-range facilities plan as revisions are made.

Implementation strategy

An implementation strategy of the plans stated above shall include, but not be limited, to the following:

- A summary of individual projects including titles, a brief project description, and preliminary estimates of total project cost and fiscal impact in constant dollars shall be provided to and assessed by the Commission. Constant dollars shall mean the estimated cost of a project based on the first year of the institution's long-range facilities plan.
- The recommended sequencing of the projects shall be considered and based on relative urgency of need and phasing considerations.
- The impact of implementation (and consequences of non-implementation) on programs, services, enrollments and operating costs shall be made.

Facilities Authorization

Commission review and approval/disapproval of capital construction projects shall consider, but not be limited to, the following criteria:

Compliance with the Comprehensive Statewide Plan

Proposed capital construction projects shall show compliance with the Comprehensive Statewide Plan as applicable to a specific project.

Consistency with Commission program review

Proposed capital construction projects should not include new or existing programs disapproved by the Commission, or new programs yet to be reviewed by the Commission. Programs should drive the construction of facilities. Constructing facilities prior to program approval can result in programs being developed to fit existing facilities.

Compliance with the *Statewide Facilities Plan*

A proposed capital construction project shall be in compliance with the *Statewide Facilities Plan* in its entirety. This shall include consistency with an institution's long-range facilities plan. Until such time as the Commission completes the review of institutional long-range facilities plans, projects shall be reviewed in the context of the most recent governing board-approved institutional long-range facilities plan.

Extent of existing facilities rehabilitation needs

Projects proposing renovation, remodeling, termination or demolition of existing facilities shall demonstrate justification in a Facilities Audit Report. The report will address the physical condition of a facility's primary and secondary structure, and building systems. The report shall also assist institutions in prioritizing the requirements of existing facilities by determining the degree of rehabilitation needs for each existing facility at the institution.

Functional adequacy of existing facilities

Existing facilities are analyzed not only by the physical condition of a structure, but also by its ability to function for the programs and activities which utilize a facility. Proposed projects for renovation, remodeling, termination or demolition shall substantiate any programmatic deficiency. These deficiencies may be the result of inadequate flexibility or layout of spaces; insufficient utility services or infrastructure for activities; insufficient fixed or specialized equipment; or other functional inadequacies, such as noise or acoustical problems or handicap accessibility deficiencies.

Consideration shall be given to externally prepared accreditation reports regarding the status of an existing instructional or service program as it relates to existing facilities. Proposed projects which address deadlines regarding possible loss of accreditation to programs approved by the Commission, will be given priority where such loss is deemed relevant and consequential by the Commission.

Quantitative adequacy of facilities
Proposed capital construction projects shall corroborate that the amount of space requested is adequately justified by staff evaluation and/or externally documented reports.

Compatibility with Institutional Planning Parameters
Existing and new programs shall demonstrate compliance with institutional Space and Land Guidelines, and Facilities Utilization Guidelines, as applicable. Projects not in compliance with these documents are required to justify any deviations to receive approval by the Commission.

Ability to meet existing and future program needs
Proposed capital construction projects must demonstrate that they will meet existing and future program needs. This ability shall be demonstrated by review of individual space needs as they relate to enrollment, personnel, research, and service projections; and by addressing the flexibility of proposed spaces to accommodate future program or activity changes. This flexibility includes the ability to accommodate new technology such as telecommunications, etc.

Capability to fund future projects and/or operating and maintenance costs
The initial cost to construct a project usually is relatively small when considered over the life of a facility. In reviewing any capital construction project, the Commission shall examine the capacity of the institution to operate and maintain the facility or complete follow-up phases of a project. The institution must demonstrate the capacity to operate and maintain the proposed facility without significant additional resources.

Analysis of alternatives
All proposals for capital construction projects shall specify alternatives to the proposed project and justify that the proposal is the best long-term resolution of the problem. Possible alternatives to a proposed project may include:

- Expansion of an existing facility in lieu of a new structure;

- Increased utilization of existing facilities;
- Increased use of similar facilities in other public or private institutions; and/or
- Use of nontraditional modes of instructional delivery, such as telecommunication and distance learning, or use of off-campus centers.

Evidence that there is not an unnecessary duplication of facilities
The Commission will review each proposed project for unnecessary duplication. Unnecessary duplication will not substantially increase access and/or serve valid needs considering other existing public or private facilities in Nebraska, other states, or consortia such as the Midwestern Higher Education Commission Compact, which are reasonably accessible to the institution.

Enhancement of institutional effectiveness/efficiencies with respect to programs and/or costs
Proposed projects shall enhance the institution's effectiveness and/or efficiency in providing programs and services. This may be demonstrated by a program's ability to provide higher quality instruction, academic/student support, research, public service or administrative/ operational support to the institution. Efficiency of a project may include cost savings to an institution through more cost effective use of personnel or utilities, or illustrate the increased productivity of students, faculty and staff. Proposals that increase productivity or reduce costs while enhancing the quality of service are preferred.

Amount of funds requested are justified
The amount of funds requested for a proposed project should be consistent with the amount and type of space and equipment required, the professional services necessary, and other costs associated with a project.

Source(s) of funds are appropriate
Funding sources shall be appropriate for the type of facility being proposed, whether the source be state, federal, student, auxiliary or private funds, or a combination of these sources. The Commission will closely examine revenue bond proposals, among others, to consider whether the burden placed on those expected to pay the debt is justifiable. Regardless of the justification of a proposed project, consideration will be given to the ability of the requested funding source(s) to finance the project. Whether funding is proposed

through state taxes, local property taxes, student fees, parking revenue or other sources, the review will include what effect the continuation at existing levels or increase of fees or taxes will have on those charged with paying those fees or taxes.

Facilities Funding

Review of capital budget requests by the Commission, and development of a unified prioritization of these requests into a statewide capital budget recommendation, shall be based on a review of the public postsecondary educational facility needs for the entire State. The use of weighted criteria in the prioritization of capital construction requests is intended to support the objectivity of the Commission's recommendations. The following provides a discussion of some of the major issues to be addressed in the prioritization of capital construction requests:

Ranking of statewide facilities categories

The Commission may consider the type of project being requested in developing a unified statewide prioritization of capital requests. The ranking of these categories shall be reviewed by the Commission on a regular basis and considered in the context of statewide needs. The following is a list of statewide facilities categories, including a general description and discussion of each category's relative importance in serving Nebraskan's public postsecondary education needs.

- Fire and Life Safety - Class I Projects
  Those items that pose an immediate threat to the safety of the students, faculty, staff, or visitor to a public institution, shall generally be given the highest priority in the Commission's Statewide Capital Budget Recommendation. Items that do not pose an immediate threat (e.g., undisturbed asbestos, non-life threatening code violations, etc.) shall not be included in this category.

- Partially Funded Projects
  Capital projects which have been previously approved by the Commission, and have been allocated partial funding for design and/or construction with state or alternative funding sources, shall be given a high priority to prevent the disruption in programs or services. A project must continue to demonstrate high merit and make satisfactory progress toward completion to maintain this priority.

- Deferred Maintenance - Class I Projects
  The Commission will give high priority for maintaining the State's existing physical assets. Particular attention will be given to items that require immediate action to provide for safety and protection against costly damage to facilities or an institution's infrastructure systems (e.g., power plant boilers, chillers or transformers; utility lines and tunnels; roads; walkways; etc.).

- Americans with Disabilities Act - Class I Projects
  Structural changes that have been clearly found to be necessary for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 or are deemed necessary by physically challenged individuals comprise this category.

- Instructional Technology and Telecommunications
  The Commission will give high priority to the use of instructional technology and telecommunications. Institutions are encouraged to enhance programs and services and provide increased access with appropriate use of these technologies.

- Institutional Planning and Programming
  The use of funds to adequately plan and program facilities on an institutional and project level shall be given strong consideration by the Commission. The development of institutional long-range facilities plans and individual project programs should act as the catalyst to best utilize the state's resources in support of the role and mission of public postsecondary education. Such planning may enhance cooperation between institutions and support joint use of existing facilities.

- Energy Conservation - Class I Projects
  Those projects which substantially reduce the energy requirements of a facility or campus, and thereby reduce the State's financial commitment to utilities will, in almost all cases, be supported by the Commission, particularly when simple payback of the project from energy savings is within a three-year period.

- Fire and Life Safety - Class II & III Projects
  This category consists of other code compliance and related projects that would improve safety.

- Renovation/Remodeling/Replacement of Existing Facilities
  In general, renovation and remodeling of existing facilities will be given higher priority than new construction. The rationale for this is compelling. Since the dramatic increases in enrollment at postsecondary educational institutions from the mid 1960's to the late 1970's, enrollment has remained fairly stable with generally only moderate increases. In this context, there has not been the need for the building boom which occurred during that era. Many of the facilities constructed during this time are now approaching 30 years of age and have required at least some maintenance if not remodeling to accommodate changing program and technological needs. It is typical that every 25 to 50 years, a facility will require major renovation to repair or replace aging materials and building systems, and meet program and technological changes. The construction costs for these renovations are generally noticeably less than the cost of new construction, and because of this, renovation/remodeling is often a wise investment in lieu of new construction. An example of when renovation is not cost effective in lieu of new construction would be the accommodation of high tech laboratories in an older facility which could not functionally accommodate the necessary utilities. In these cases' replacement of a facility may be necessary. In almost all cases, replacement projects will include the divestiture of original space used by a program or service through demolition or sale, thus preventing increases in ongoing facilities operating and maintenance costs.

- Infrastructure Expansion
  This category includes expansion of an institution's existing infrastructure systems for use in expanding institutional space in the future. The need for additional space must be justified before consideration will be given to expanding infrastructure systems.

- New Construction Projects
  The people of Nebraska have a substantial financial commitment in existing facility resources. There are circumstances, however, when specific programs or campus conditions require an addition to existing facilities or construction of new structures. Generally, all other alternatives shall be exhausted before this option is considered by the Commission.

- Deferred Maintenance - Class II & III Projects
  This category includes other maintenance items that if neglected will quickly deteriorate and items that would fully renew a facility or infrastructure system.

- Americans with Disability Act - Class II and III Projects
  This category includes all other items necessary to comply with this federal legislation and improve accessibility.

- Energy Conservation - Class II & III Projects
  Projects in this category will reduce expenditures for energy use.

- Institutional Land Acquisition
  Proposed land acquisition required to meet the needs of individual capital construction projects should generally be included as a part of those specific project requests. Additional land acquisition requested to meet projected needs as outlined in the institution's long-range facilities plan, shall generally be considered as an individual project and receive its own priority by the Commission.

The Commission may choose to prioritize specific project proposals out of sequence with these facilities categories, based on additional prioritization criteria. Additional issues that may be considered in prioritizing capital construction requests are as follows:

Sector Initiatives
The Commission may consider governing board targeted "sector initiatives" in the development of priorities. Such designations enable the Commission to incorporate governing board priorities and strategic planning into its priority process.

Institutional long-range facilities planning
The Commission may consider governing board approved planning documents and their relation to specific project requests in its prioritization of capital projects. The Commission will review external/internal factors, strategic/facilities planning linkages, and methodologies for institutional capital asset management.

Immediacy of need
Prioritization of proposed projects may be based on the degree of immediate need in contrast to future growth or expansion requirements. This does not

mean a project proposal should not consider program growth in its planning. The purpose is to accommodate those programs with immediate needs first, with efficiency being one objective.

Quality of a facility
The condition and function of a facility for use by a program or service may be considered in the development of priorities. Potential qualitative issues include the condition of the primary and secondary building systems, and the functional layout of a facility for its intended purpose.

Unnecessary duplication
Unnecessary duplication of facilities may be evaluated in the prioritization process. Unnecessary duplication may be defined as a facility that does not substantially increase access and/or serve valid needs. The Commission will likely consider overall institutional utilization, reasonably accessible existing public and/or private facilities in Nebraska, neighboring states or consortia such as the Midwestern Higher Education Commission Compact, when considering unnecessary duplication.

Appropriate quantity of space
A program or service may show that a project provides an appropriate quantity of space for a program or service as part of the prioritization process. Potential methods of demonstrating an appropriate quantity of space include use of space or land guidelines, facility utilization reports, or recommendations from professional planners.

Role and mission
The relative ranking of each sector's role and mission (instruction, research and public service) and support services area (academic/student support and administrative/operational support), may be considered by the Commission.

Degree to which an institution maintains its existing physical plant
In determining which projects receive priority in the Commission's *Statewide Capital Budget Recommendation*, consideration may be given as to how well an institution maintains its existing assets. The Commission does not support the consequence of deferring maintenance to justify need for new construction or substantial rehabilitation which may have been avoided by more prudent management.

Ongoing costs
Potential long-term costs associated with a capital construction request may be considered in the prioritization process. The Commission may wish to provide incentive to reduce state funding needs for facility operating and maintenance costs through energy conservation methods or use of alternative funding sources.

Phasing considerations
Proposed projects that require the completion of other projects prior to their beginning may be considered by the Commission when prioritizing individual project requests. For example, a project to expand power plant capacity prior to construction of a new or expanded facility may have priority. A project will not be artificially prioritized higher simply to meet a phasing requirement.

In addition to prioritizing capital construction requests, the Commission may also make general funding recommendations regarding the University of Nebraska and Nebraska State College capital construction budget requests. Additional issues may be considered by the Commission in developing a Statewide Capital Construction Recommendation, including but not limited to the following:

Economic conditions
The Commission may consider the existing and projected ability of the State to support its existing assets prior to considering additional requests.

Appropriate amount of tax funds
The Commission may consider what amount of tax funds is appropriate considering the type and use of a facility request in addition to other considerations.

Impact of Other Educational Facilities

The range and capacity of public, independent and private postsecondary educational facilities in Nebraska, neighboring states, and consortia such as the Midwestern Higher Education Commission Compact, which are reasonably accessible, shall be considered in the review of proposed long-range facilities plans, individual project requests and capital budget requests.

Consenting independent and private postsecondary educational institutions are encouraged to provide any available facilities information which would

assist the Commission in the review of proposed capital construction projects at the State's public institutions in the context of reviewing facilities from a statewide perspective.

Facilities Planning, Guidelines and Data Base

The state and its postsecondary institutions must develop facilities planning guidelines and data base information. A statewide facilities information base will include appropriate information on the amount and condition of institutional facilities, including information on how well facilities are being utilized. This information will be useful in developing efficient and exemplary facilities to serve an institution's role and mission, and will also prevent the state from creating sprawling edifices which future generations cannot afford to support. It is the goal of the Commission that this information be used by the campuses to effectively manage their existing physical assets as well as plan for future facilities needs, and by the Commission in reviewing facilities from a statewide perspective. The Commission will establish, in collaboration with institutions, guidelines for developing a statewide facilities information base and for institutional long-range facilities plans, based on nationally accepted practices.

APPENDIX 1

NEBRASKA POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS	
THE COMMUNITY COLLEGES	Central Community College Metropolitan Community College Mid-Plains Community College Northeast Community College Southeast Community College Western Nebraska Community College
THE STATE COLLEGE SYSTEM	Chadron State College Peru State College Wayne State College
THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA	Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture University of Nebraska at Kearney University of Nebraska-Lincoln University of Nebraska Medical Center University of Nebraska at Omaha
INDEPENDENT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES	Bellevue University, Clarkson College, College of Saint Mary, Concordia University, Creighton University, Dana College, Doane College, Grace University, Hastings College, Midland Lutheran College, Nebraska Christian College, Nebraska Methodist College, Nebraska Wesleyan University, Platte Valley Bible College, Union College, York College
PRIVATE CAREER SCHOOLS **Business Schools**	Grand Island College, Vaterott College
Barber & Cosmetology Schools	Academy of Nails, Bahner College of Hairstyling Beauty and Barber Training, Capitol School of Hairstyling, College of Hair Design, Columbus Beauty College, EQ School of Hair Design, Fullen School of Hair Design, Joseph's College of Beauty, KT College of Hair Design, LaRose's Beauty Academy, McCook Beauty Academy, Xenon International School of Hair Design
Driver Training Schools	Custom Diesel Drivers Training, Inc.

NEBRASKA POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS	
Hospitals offering Nursing & Allied Health Programs	Alegent Health School of Radiologic Technology, Alegent Immanuel Medical Center - Midland Lutheran College, Bryan Memorial Hospital/University of Kansas School of Nurse Anesthesia, Bryan Memorial Hospital School of Nursing, Mary Lanning Memorial Hospital School of Radiologic Technology, Omaha College of Health Careers, Regional West Medical Center School of Radiologic Technology, Saint Joseph Hospital School of Radiologic Technology
Junior Colleges of Business	Lincoln School of Commerce, Nebraska College of Business
Pilot Schools	Offutt Aero Club, Sky Harbor Air Service, Inc.
Real Estate Schools	Great Plains School of Real Estate, Larabee School of Real Estate & Insurance, McMahon School of Real Estate, The Moore Group, Professional School of Real Estate, Randall School of Real Estate
Trade & Technical Schools	Advanced Network Technologies, Celebrity Training Center, Inc., The Craftsman School, The Creative Center, ITT Technical Institute, MicroAge Learning Center, Midwest Bartenders School, North American Travel School, Omaha Opportunities Industrialization Center, Inc., The Railway Educational Bureau, Travel Careers Institute, Universal Technical Institute
Modeling Schools	International School of Modeling, Nancy Bounds Studios
Miscellaneous Schools	Career Achievement, H&R Block Tuition Tax Schools, Kaplan Educational Centers, Myotherapy Institute, Omaha School of Massage Therapy

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